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## 'MORE THAN WHAT WE HAD'

AN ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION OF  
THE VILLAGE CREEK PROJECT NEIGHBORHOODS,  
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

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CONTRACT NO.DACW01-89-C-0110

NEW SOUTH ASSOCIATES  
4889 LEWIS ROAD  
STONE MOUNTAIN, GEORGIA 30083

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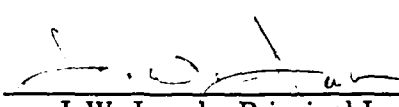
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Mobile District  
109 St. Joseph Street  
Mobile, Alabama 36628

Report prepared by:

New South Associates  
4889 Lewis Road  
Stone Mountain, Georgia 30083

and

John Milner Associates  
309 North Matlack Street  
West Chester, Pennsylvania 19380



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J. W. Joseph - Principal Investigator

Mary Beth Reed - Historian and Author

J. W. Joseph, William R. Henry, Richard T. Bryant, and Julie C. Cantley - Contributors

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(20) the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ensley most closely resembles a company town, planned and developed as a distinct urban entity geared to the Ensley (later TCI and U.S. Steel) ironworks. The catalyst for the development of East Birmingham was also industrial, although in this instance no single industry sponsored this growth, and the community instead reflects an organic development as various developers, landlords, and private individuals built and enjoyed this neighborhood's proximity to a variety of industrial plants. Both East Lake and Roebuck championed escape from industry, and geared themselves toward middle management and the professional classes. East Lake followed the grid and streetcar development scheme adopted by Ensley and East Birmingham, while Roebuck offered the new suburban ideal, following site topography and stressing a return to nature. The houses built along Village Creek, nature's artery between these communities, were for the most part late additions to their neighborhoods, built on a marginal landscape which nonetheless offered affordable housing, primarily to black factory workers. These structures share a common philosophy of simple form and inexpensive construction, a vernacular geared toward their builders and inhabitants alike. Development along the creek followed no overriding plan or scheme; individuals selected house types from a limited repertoire, based on the land available to them, the positions of other structures, and the goals of such housing. A pattern of mixed residential, kin-occupied, and rental architecture built on one lot appears to be one path followed by more affluent or ambitious workers. Landlords from outside the neighborhood and private owners/builders were also noted by this study. These houses reflect their position within community, the socio-economic standing of their residents, and the repertoire house types familiar to their builders.

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## PREFACE

When asked during the course of the Village Creek architectural documentation to describe her feelings on her move to her East Birmingham home, Mrs. Georgia Scott responded:

We thought we were in heaven... you know, when you lived in a mining camp so long and when you get something that's better, you love it.... we just liked it cause it was more than what we had....

Mrs. Scott's expression of the motivation and emotion which entailed her move from company to private housing eloquently and efficiently expresses the rationale behind the architecture documented by this project. By and large these houses represent private responses to industrial housing; a separate urban environment carved out of the industrial neighborhoods of Ensley and East Birmingham. Built by speculators, landlords, and homeowners alike, the residents of these homes possessed an ethos which valued independence, and which was realized through the construction of simple and inexpensive housing along the marginal lands adjoining Village Creek. The Village Creek architecture should be seen as a corollary to company housing and planned communities; one which represents an organic growth and development.

Mary Beth Reed's study of this architectural tradition brings to life another aspect of Birmingham's industrial culture. This study provides thoughtful discussions, descriptions, and interpretations of worker's housing in Birmingham during the first part of the twentieth century, as well as a review of the types of suburban neighborhoods which developed in response to industrialization. Together with the Birmingham Historical Society's survey documentation (*Village Creek: An Architectural and Historical Resources Survey of the Village Creek Project Neighborhoods, City of Birmingham, Jefferson County, Alabama*), the project areas constitute some of the most thoroughly studied southern urban industrial neighborhoods. We hope that this study can add to the history of Birmingham and Village Creek, and will be of use to architectural historians, urban historians, urban planners, labor historians, historical archeologists, and others interested in urban development. As importantly, we hope that these pages capture something of what it was like to live within one of these houses and one of these neighborhoods. We would like to thank Mrs. Georgia Scott, and the many others like her, who took the time to try and tell us their story, and make us see their community as they once saw. This is their story.

J. W. Joseph  
Principal Investigator  
New South Associates  
Stone Mountain, Georgia  
September 21, 1989

## ABSTRACT

The Village Creek Architectural and Historical Documentation Project consisted of the preparation of measured floor plans for 26 historic structures; streetscape photographs for sections of East Birmingham and East Lake/Roebuck; historical research and photographic documentation of a church and store in East Birmingham and a Victorian Cottage in East Lake/Roebuck; oral historical interviews; and the preparation of a project report documenting these efforts. The neighborhoods under study: Ensley, East Birmingham, East Lake, and Roebuck, represent different responses to Birmingham's industrial expansion of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ensley most closely resembles a company town, planned and developed as a distinct urban entity geared to the Ensley (later TCI and U. S. Steel) ironworks. The catalyst for the development of East Birmingham was also industrial, although in this instance no single industry sponsored this growth, and the community instead reflects an organic development as various developers, landlords, and private individuals built and enjoyed this neighborhood's proximity to a variety of industrial plants. Both East Lake and Roebuck championed escape from industry, and geared themselves toward middle management and the professional classes. East Lake followed the grid and streetcar development scheme adopted by Ensley and East Birmingham, while Roebuck offered the new suburban ideal, following site topography and stressing a return to nature. The houses built along Village Creek, nature's artery between these communities, were for the most part late additions to their neighborhoods, built on a marginal landscape which none-the-less offered affordable housing, primarily to black factory workers. These structures share a common philosophy of simple form and inexpensive construction, a vernacular geared toward their builders and inhabitants alike. Development along the creek followed no overriding plan or scheme; individuals selected house types from a limited repertoire, based on the land available to them, the positions of other structures, and the goals of such housing. A pattern of mixed residential, kin-occupied, and rental architecture built on one lot appears to be one path followed by more affluent or ambitious workers. Landlords from outside the neighborhood and private owners/builders were also noted by this study. These houses reflect their position within the community, the socio-economic standing of their residents, and the repertoire of house types familiar to their builders.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The conduct of the Village Creek architectural documentation was greatly facilitated by a number of individuals. At the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, we owe a profound thanks to Dr. Charles Moorehead, the project's Contracting Officer's Technical Representative. Dr. Moorehead's understanding of Birmingham's built environment and familiarity with the vernacular architecture of Alabama greatly assisted our research investigations, and we appreciate his guidance and insights which were freely offered throughout the course of the documentation. Also at the Corps, Mr. Don Seagraves, Mr. Tommy Pierce, and the staff of the Corps' Village Creek project office in Birmingham aided in project logistics and offered backup and support, and their role in this successful undertaking is gratefully recognized.

Numerous other scholars of Birmingham and of architectural history in general have contributed to this research. We would like to thank Ms. Marjorie L. White of the Birmingham Historical Society for sharing the results and impressions of the previous phase of investigation at Village Creek, as produced by the Historical Society, as well as for making available National Register of Historic Places Nomination Forms completed for the Roebuck neighborhoods. Don Veasey and Jim Murray at the Department of Archives and Manuscripts at the Birmingham Public Library deserve special thanks for their help and amiable demeanor while pulling a seemingly innumerable amount of old tax appraisals. Ms. Yvonne Crumpler of the Birmingham Public Library was also helpful in pointing out the major sources on Birmingham's history. Finally, Gunetta Rich of the staff of the W. S. Hoole Special Collections Library at the University of Alabama was kind enough to send Sanborn maps of the study area to us.

The project reported herein represented a joint study conducted by John Milner Associates and its affiliate New South Associates. We would like to recognize the contributions of this combined staff to the project. William R. Henry served as project Architectural Historian, and is responsible for the measurements and field views of the architectural documentation, as well as for the preparation of draft architectural descriptions and for the conduct of oral informant interviews. Dick Bryant served as project photographer, and capably composed, captured, and developed the views shown herein and included in the project folio. Mr. Henry and Mr. Bryant were assisted during the field phase by Eric Johnson and Al Woods. Mr. Woods, Mr. Henry, Larry Haikey, Mary Beth Reed, and J. W. Joseph conducted the oral informant interviews prepared as part of this documentation package. Julie Cantley was responsible for the preparation of the final inked versions of the project floor plans, as well as for the production of the graphic illustrations contained in this report. Ms. Reed served as the report's primary author, while Mr. Henry and Mr. Joseph contributed to the architectural descriptions and introductory and methodological discussions respectively. The report was edited by Mr. Joseph at New South Associates.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### Project Background

This report presents the findings of historical and architectural historical documentation conducted for the Village Creek Flood Control Project, Birmingham, Alabama. Research was directed toward three neighborhoods included in the Village Creek Flood Control Project area: Ensley, East Birmingham, and Roebuck (Figure 1). This program of research and recordation was conducted by John Milner Associates and its affiliate, New South Associates, under contract to the Mobile District of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (contract number DACW01-89-C-0110). The work involved consisted of architectural recordation and historical research for the Village Creek Historic Architectural Resources Study, and serves as a supplement and complement to work previously performed for this study (Hudgins and White 1985). This investigation has been conducted as part of the Corps' planning and documentation process for the Village Creek project. The tasks required by this contract were intent on providing further architectural documentation of the study area. These tasks, as presented in the project Scope of Work (Mobile Corps 1989), were as follows:

Task 1 - The Cultural Resources Human-Use and Occupation Overview. "The purpose of this task is to document the human use and occupation of one (1) neighborhood (Roebuck) and two (2) buildings located in East Birmingham."

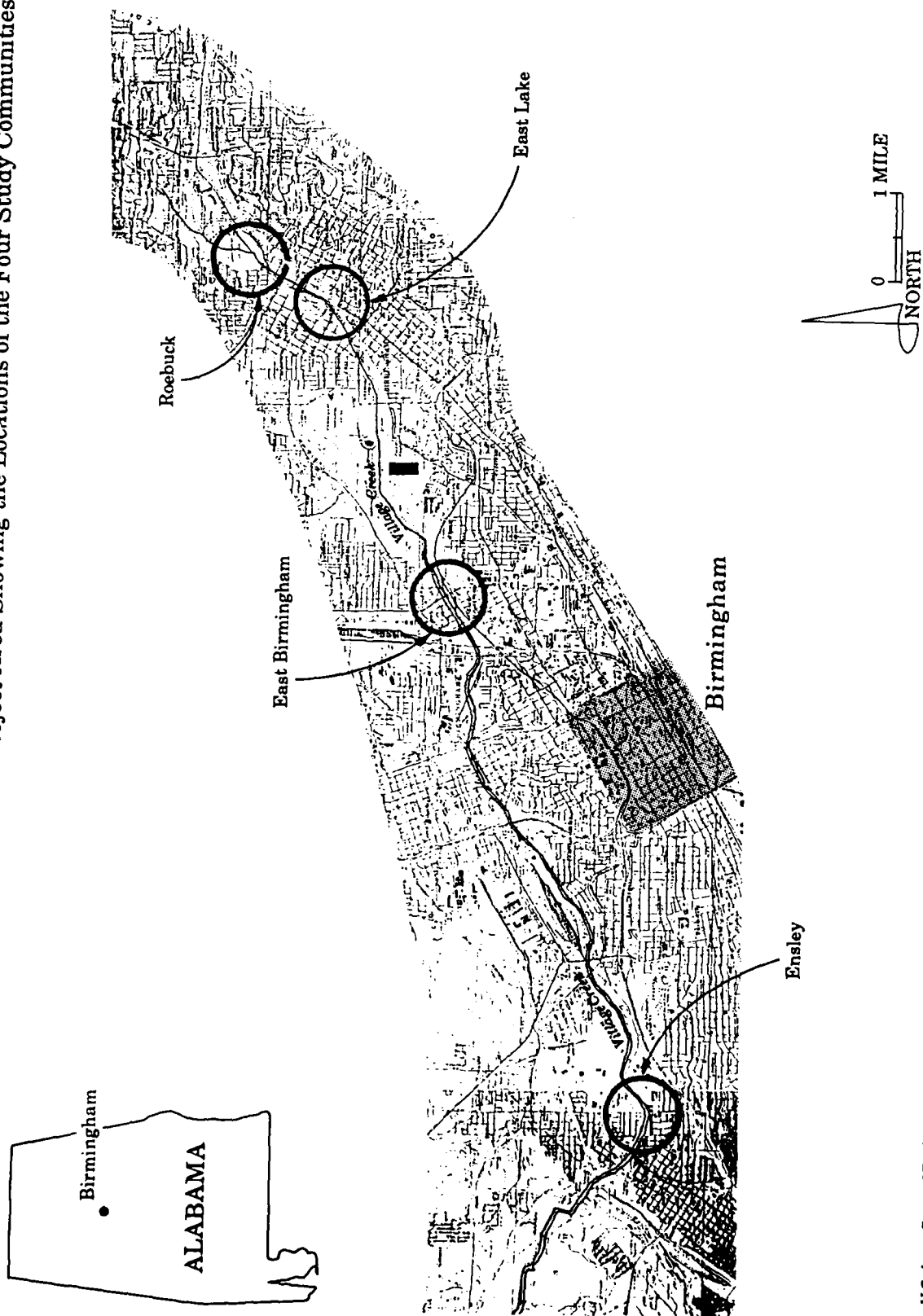
Task 2 - Streetscape Photographs. Streetscape photographs were required for portions of Roebuck and of East Birmingham, in order to document the appearance and use of these neighborhoods.

Task 3 - Structure Photographs. Exterior and interior photographs were required for a Brick Store and Church located in East Birmingham, and for a Victorian Cottage located in Roebuck.

Task 4 - Floor Plans. The preparation of measured floor plan drawings were required for a group of 24 structures selected by the Corps for documentation. The majority of these structures were located in Ensley and East Birmingham, although one structure was included from Roebuck.

Task 5 - Local Informant Interviews. Interviews were to be carried out with individuals knowledgeable of the history of Roebuck, as well as with individuals cognizant of the history and use of the store and church buildings located in East Birmingham. In addition to these interviews, informants identified during the architectural documentation process were interviewed for information which they

**FIGURE 1**  
Project Area Showing the Locations of the Four Study Communities



Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

could provide on architecture and neighborhood development in Ensley and East Birmingham.

Task 6 - Study Conclusions. The Scope of Work required that a "concise summary" be prepared including "statements about any important points concerning the historic use and occupation of the appropriate study areas... [and] any evidence of structure diffusion from a rural to urban environment should be noted and explained in the historical narrative." This report presents the study conclusions.

Task 7 - The Management Summary. A Management Summary report, presenting the pertinent findings of the architectural documentation, was prepared and presented to Army Corps on July 18, 1989.

Field work was undertaken by a team consisting of Bill Henry (Architectural Historian), Dick Bryant (Photographer), Mary Beth Reed (Historian), Al Woods (Assistant Architectural Historian and Informant Interviewer), Larry Haikey (Informant Interviewer), Eric Johnson (Photographic Assistant), and Julie Cantley (Drafter), under the direction of Principal Investigator J. W. Joseph. Field architectural documentation was conducted during the period from May 22nd to June 14th, 1989. Photographic processing and development was conducted during the weeks of June 26th, July 10th, and September 4th through 18th. Historical research was conducted during the period from June 19th through July 14th. The preparation of final inked versions of the site floor plans was conducted during the period from July 10th through 25th. Report production was carried out during the months of July, August, and September.

While the primary goal of this project was documentary in nature, the work performed was undertaken within a research design developed in consultation and consideration of the previous phase of study (Hudgins and White 1985) and the goals of the Village Creek Historic Architectural Resources Study. This research design recognized three topics to which the project findings might contribute information: urban planning, architectural construction and design, and transitions in the population matrix. The research design which guided these investigations, as presented in the technical proposal prepared for this investigation, is presented below.

## **Project Research Design**

### *Urban Planning*

The communities studied as components of the Village Creek Historic Architectural Resources Study: East Lake, Roebuck, East Birmingham, and Ensley, represent different solutions to suburbanization applied to late nineteenth-century Birmingham. East Lake and Roebuck were both geared

toward the managerial class, and emphasized their separation from Birmingham's industrial sectors. East Birmingham was built for its proximity to the furnaces and factories which surrounded it, and served as housing for industrial workers, but it was not associated with any particular industrial organization or land company. Ensley most closely resembled a factory town, owned, built and associated with the TCI furnaces. Because the histories of each of these communities is different, it is assumed that the urban plans and architecture associated with them will also vary. The following research questions addressed urban planning.

(1) What was the model for the development of each community? Were these based on northern industrial towns, southern mill towns, or other examples of suburbanization? How were the differences in the intent of these communities reflected in their layout and architecture?

While it may not be possible to directly identify cities and suburbs which served as models for these communities, by examining their plans it should be possible to determine the types of communities which they most resemble. For example, Ensley appears to share many characteristics of northern industrial communities: industry as its central focus; shops, banks, and other commercial enterprises providing for autonomy from the surrounding city; and relatively unadorned, serviceable structures as the residential mode. East Lake and Roebuck, on the other hand, appear to have been influenced by Olmsted's and others' concepts of suburbanization, combining recreational and residential space and working with the natural landscape and topography. By defining the models employed in these communities, the ideology behind their construction and use can also be discerned.

(2) Village Creek and the surrounding lands have been described by Hudgins and White (1985) as somewhat marginal to the surrounding communities, since the creek was prone to flooding and thus less desirable as residential space. Is this marginality reflected by differences in the architectural forms and planning observed in these areas? If such differences exist, are they associated with any socio-economic or racial stratification?

In order to address this research topic, it is necessary to consider the surrounding neighborhoods as well as the study area. Because the project research is focused on a portion of these communities distinguished by different environmental factors, a comparison should be made between these sections and the communities as a whole. Of interest is the resemblance of the Village Creek properties to the surrounding neighborhood. Since these lands were least desirable, and hence the last developed, they may not be incorporated into the community plan, and such land may have been purchased and built upon after organized community development was completed. If this land was included within community design, then its less desirable aspects may be reflected in varying architectural style, and a stratification from other areas of the communities. It is important that this area be considered within the context of the community, since it represents a distinct environmental setting.

## *Architectural Construction and Design*

The accumulation of floor plans from a significant sample of early twentieth-century residential structures offers a unique opportunity to address variations and transitions in architectural construction and design. The following research questions apply to this research domain.

(1) What is the relationship between architectural style and building materials over time? How is this relationship expressed within and outside the planned community? Do styles remain constant while materials change, or do materials remain static while styles change? Are both influenced by the passage of time?

A basic assumption of this topic, and others addressed in this section, is that the communities under study went from organization to disorganization over time. That is, Ensley, East Lake, Roebuck, and East Birmingham all began as planned communities. It is thus assumed that the architectural styles and materials incorporated into the construction of these communities should reflect this unity. Over time, housing construction became more of an individual concern. Were the more recent structures modeled on spatial divisions expressed in the original communities, or did they represent new adaptations not available among the older homes? Were they built using traditional materials, and thus reflecting their place as part of the community, or did they incorporate more modern construction and thus separate themselves from the older development? The construction materials and styles of buildings erected after the completion of community development will provide information on the acceptance or rejection of the planned housing by its residents and neighbors.

(2) What do the variations in the use of internal space within different house types (shotgun, bungalow, cottage, etc.) reveal about their inhabitants? How do these internal dynamics change over time, and what does this reveal about changing cultural patterns?

As Glassie (1976) and others have noted, a structure's internal dynamics reflect patterns of social and cultural interaction, as well as the socio-economic standing of the inhabitants. While modeling is perhaps more readily revealed in vernacular structures, which respond directly to their inhabitant's needs and means, the floor plans and division of space observed within these community developments should indicate the assumptions of their builders concerning the intended occupants. Modifications made after these buildings were acquired represent the vernacular aspect of this study, since these indicate ways in which the inhabitants sought to restructure their homes to fit their needs. Comparisons among the various structure types, when correlated with residential data, should yield patterns of socio-cultural and structural associations.

### *Transitions in the Population Matrix*

How are changes in residential population expressed in architectural style, design, and ornamentation? Can historically documented population shifts be discerned from the area's architecture?

Neighborhoods and structures must be understood as organic entities, each going through a life cycle in which the most significant events are shifts in the population. The imprint of these population changes on the architectural body thus must be considered. For example, the shotgun house type is one closely identified with Afro-American occupations. Both East Birmingham and Ensley witnessed sharp increases in the percentage of shotgun houses built during the decade from 1921 to 1930. Does this indicate a change in the population makeup of these communities? A comparison of architectural styles and documented population shifts will provide the basis for understanding the imprint of changes in the population matrix on the built environment.

### **Report Outline**

The remainder of this report provides a discussion of the research and results derived from the Village Creek architectural documentation. Chapter II discusses the research methods employed in this investigation. Chapter III provides an historical overview of Ensley, East Birmingham, East Lake and Roebuck. Chapter IV summarizes the architectural types found within the survey area. Chapter V presents the information recorded during the architectural documentation on a case-by-case basis. Finally, Chapter VI presents the synthesis and conclusions concerning the importance of this documentation to understanding Birmingham's domestic architecture.

## II. METHODS

The Village Creek architectural documentation required the coordination of several research disciplines and techniques: historic architecture, photography, history, and oral history. The methods employed for each are discussed below.

### Architectural Documentation

The architectural documentation sought to create measured plans of the dwellings included in the study group. The addresses of the structures included in the architectural documentation, and the structure number designation assigned each during the field study, are listed below:

1 - 1429 Apalachee Street; 2 - 1326 Sipsey Street; 3 - 3956 Thirteenth Avenue North; 4 - 1227 Cahaba Street; 5 - 3926 Sixteenth Avenue North; 6 - 3928 Sixteenth Avenue North; 7 - 1624 Tombigbee Street; 8 - 1622 Tombigbee Street; 9 - 1606 Tombigbee Street; 10 - 1622 Warrior Street; 11 - 1314 Sipsey Street; 12 - 1419 Apalachee Street North; 13 - 1421 Apalachee Street North; 14 - 1433 Apalachee Street North; 15 - 1334 and 1336 Coosa Street (Store); 16 - 3915 Fourteenth Avenue North (Church); 17 - 1334 Avenue V; 18 - 1313 Twelfth Place; 19 - 1116 Eleventh Street; 20 - 1126 Eleventh Street; 21 - 1124 Eleventh Street; 22 - 1128 Eleventh Street; 23 - 1130 Eleventh Street; 24 - 1308/1310 Twelfth Place; 25 - 1313 Twelfth Place; 26 - 8600 First Court North.

Structures numbered one through sixteen are located in East Birmingham. The remainder are located in Ensley with the exception of 8600 First Court North, which is situated in Roebuck.

In order to record the interiors of these dwellings, appointments were made in advance for each visitation and recordation session. A base plan was prepared for shotgun structures, which formed a large percentage of the study group, and measurements were then transferred to copies of this base plan, as well as information on additions, the locations of windows, and other specific details. Scaled drawings and notes were made for all other structure types. A 35 mm photograph was made of each structure recorded. Measurements were recorded using the English measurement system. Entry was not available to one structure from the study list, 3928 16th Avenue North, due to recent fire damage. The structure was recorded from the exterior. Two structures not included in the project list, but for which access was available through Corps acquisition, 1308/1310 and 1318 12th Place, were added to the documentation package. Final field drawings were prepared before the completion of the field investigations, in order to determine whether any measurements had been left out, or required re-checking. Scaled ink versions of these floor plans were prepared at New South Associates' Stone Mountain, Georgia, office and laboratory facility. Each drawing

was made on an 8 1/2 by 11 inch fresh sheet of mylar, and show the floorplan, English and Metric scales, and street address. These final drawings are part of the project documentation folio, and are also utilized in this report.

### **Photographic Documentation**

Streetscape photographs were made for the portion of East Birmingham bounded by 38th Street, Tallapoosa Street, 14th Avenue, and 12th Avenue and for 3rd Avenue and 2nd Court Street between 86th and 87th streets in Roebuck. All streetscape views were taken using a Sinar 4 X 5 inch view camera. In order to record as much information regarding these streetscapes as possible, four views were taken of each block, each consisting of one half of one side of each block. Streetscape forms were completed for each block, noting the use of the block (i.e. residential, commercial, etc.), house numbers, the traffic pattern and traffic markers, vegetation, landscaping and modifications, and other significant aspects of the particular block. One print of each view is provided with the documentation folio. The street name, orientation, and date of exposure is recorded on a gummed label affixed to the back of each view. Streetscape forms are included with these views.

Exterior and interior photographs were made for the Brick Store and Church located in East Birmingham and for the Victorian Cottage in Roebuck. These were also conducted in 4 X 5 format. Exterior views were executed using the wide-angle lens or a 150 mm F5.6 Schneider Symmar-S, while close-ups of particular construction elements were made with a 210 mm F-9 Schneider G-Claron. One facade and one side view was taken of each structure.

All streetscape and structure photographs were developed for archival permanence using fresh chemicals and professional development techniques. The original negatives, in archival quality negative protectors, are included with the project folio. The complete address of the view, name of the photographer, orientation, and date of exposure is hand lettered in pencil on the negative protector.

### **Historical Research**

Historical research was aimed at retrieving general information about all of the structures within the study area and at collecting more specific data on the brick commercial building located on the corner of Coosa and Fourteenth Avenue and the frame Church on Fourteenth Avenue. City directories were consulted at ten year intervals for all of the dwellings. Board of Equalization records, historic tax data maintained for each property in Birmingham and now housed at the Birmingham Public Library Archives, was also consulted. These tax records contain the results of surveys of the dwellings conducted in 1939 and the early 1940s, usually including a photograph, a plan drawing, and a verbal description of the property. This historic information was combined with the results of the



architectural data gained from this project to create biographies for each of the structures under investigation. More detailed data collection was undertaken for the Church and Store, including land records, tax records, and informant interviews. City directories were also consulted to identify who occupied these establishments within the neighborhood and their use over time.

Published sources, books, maps, and articles on the general history of Birmingham and the study communities were also collected. The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps corrected to 1928 was perused as well as other cartographic sources on the city of Birmingham. The 1911 Sanborn Maps were ordered from the University of Alabama's Hoole Library in Tuscaloosa, which is the only repository in the state in possession of an uncorrected Sanborn series. The papers of the Roebuck Land Company in the holdings of the Archives at the Birmingham Public Library's were also examined. The Birmingham Historical Society and Roebuck's historian, Mildred Hearn, were contacted for information on the development of that community. The Historical Society made available, through transferral to the City Archives, copies of their National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for Roebuck Terrace and Roebuck Springs.

## **Oral History**

Interviews with persons familiar with the neighborhoods and the study structures were conducted as well as with persons familiar with the development of Roebuck. These ethnographic interviews followed Spradley's (1979) "grand tour/mini tour" scheme, in which a series of broad research questions were crafted, which would elicit both general and specific information from knowledgeable informants. Grand tour questions focused on the dates of construction for neighborhood dwellings, architectural styles and materials, neighborhoods patterns, and changes over time. Mini tour questions attempted to retrieve more specific information about the informants and their individual houses. Cassette tapes of these interviews were made where permissible, and authorization sheets for the use of these tapes were secured. Finding guides were produced for the tapes of the interviews, and are included with the curation package. Photographs of those individuals interviewed were taken when permitted, some of which are included herein.

### III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

*Beginning about 1887 and reaching a peak in 1890, a speculator's boom in town real estate swept the South, especially the mineral region. Scarcely a town in that section was too small to be without its Land Improvement Company, capitalized at preposterous figures, and making its heaviest investment in advertising. For Birmingham the boom was only one of several fevers that shook the town, but perhaps the most violent. "Why, men would come in at four o'clock in the morning and begin making trades before breakfast," recalled an old citizen. "Property changed hands four and five times a day.... Men went crazy two hours after getting here.... A brand new sensation was born every day." (Woodward 1971:137).*

*"Ensley turned to me," says Colonel Shook, "and he said, 'Shook, I'm going to build a town in these woods. Right where you are standing; that's the center of it. I'm going to build a town, Shook, that'll be like a brindle cow suckling herself, and I'm going to call that town Ensley.' We walked on further, and Ensley continued, 'I intend to fill this valley, from the foot of the chert ridge yonder to the Pratt Railroad, with manufacturing plants. I'm going to build four big blast furnaces and a steel plant. The whole of this chert ridge I'll use for residences, and the day the work is begun I'll agree to pay \$200 a foot for this corner lot, and here I will build the Bank of Ensley'" (Armes 1939:395).*

The Biblical overtones of Ensley's vision of his future town is unmistakable. Ensley's "religious community" however would be furnished with four furnaces, a steel plant, and industrial housing all economically tied to his corner stone, the Bank of Ensley. Ensley's vision was not the only one of its scope, nor was it the first, during Alabama's pig iron boom in the nineteenth century. Until the 1870s, the Southern iron industry was in an embryonic state, perceived in term of its potential more than its reality. Birmingham was in a similar state. Essentially "born of an old cornfield in 1871 of the union of a land company and a railroad," the city would not take hold until 1879, when a business revival brought on by a number of national factors ushered in the Southern iron industry (Woodward 1971: 128,136). The main player within the development of Alabama's mineral region was the Louisville and Nashville (L&N) Railroad, headed by Milton Hannibal Smith. The railroad was in possession of approximately one half million acres of land in Central Alabama in the late 1870s, and, in the next decade, the company had connected Birmingham with outlying coal and iron towns, established company towns, and placed 32 furnaces along their lines. Woodward (1971:127) notes that the L&N, with its extensive landholdings in the mineral district and the transportation lines which traversed it, directed the investment of more than \$30,000,000 in mines, furnaces, and rails over a twenty year period.

Within the city, the first furnace, Alice Furnace No. 1, was put into blast and eleven other companies followed suit. By 1890, Birmingham had 28 furnaces in blast and was producing 8.8 percent of the nation's total iron production (Hudgins and White 1985:16). While the iron industry took off in other southern states, such as Tennessee and Virginia, Alabama quickly outpaced her southern rivals and put northern producers on the alert. Pig iron production between the years of 1876 and 1901 increased seventeen times within the South; the country as a whole experienced a much less dramatic rise (Woodward 1971:128). The major characters within this growth were like Ensley: expansive and eager. Some were Northerners and some were from the South. Success was sometimes ephemeral. At one point, Henry Fairchild DeBardeleben, an Alabamian, was the director of the DeBardeleben Coal and Iron Company, which controlled seven furnaces, seven coal mines, seven ore mines and nine hundred coke ovens, railroads and quarries. DeBardeleben explained, "I was the eagle and I wanted to eat up all the craw-fish I could, -- swallow up all the little fellows, and I did it." Woodward (1971:128-129) points out that, ironically, after having financial problems, "DeBardeleben was swallowed by Inman -- who in turn was swallowed by Morgan, the biggest eagle of them all."

The following narrative is, in a sense, about eagles and crawfish, albeit on a less grand scale. When John T. Milner, the chief engineer for the South and North Alabama Railway and partner within the Elyton Land Company, sited the intersection of the South and North railway and the Alabama and Chattanooga Railway in Jones Valley, he also acquired the options on 4,000 acres of adjacent farmland for the land company. This acreage, which became Birmingham, was gridded into streets and avenues in 1871 by William B. Barker, a civil engineer. Birmingham, supported economically by the iron industry, prospered. The success of the Elyton Land Company drew other speculators to the region, who developed towns and communities in the hopes that they would in turn mimic Birmingham's success. The communities under study: Ensley, East Birmingham, East Lake, and Roebuck, were conceived or engendered during this period. The first two were inextricably tied to industry, but the evolution of each demonstrates a different response to this union. Within these communities the survey area along Village Creek was typically the last to be residentially occupied. Industry pioneered the creek vicinity and worker's housing followed. East Lake with its park and lake was the harbinger of a new type of suburb where industry did not coexist with housing. If East Lake was a harbinger, Roebuck Springs was its logical outcome. Roebuck's development echoed a different ethos in urban planning, a sensitivity to topography and the recognition of standards of health, leisure, and nature (Wright 1985:158). The following chapter provides an overview of the development of these communities, which became part of the city proper in 1910, to provide a context for the sample of houses, and the church and store, which form the basis for this architectural study. For a fuller treatment of the social historical development of East Lake, Ensley, and East Birmingham, the reader is referred to the study of these neighborhoods conducted by Hudgins and White in 1985. Credit is also given to the Birmingham Historical Society for their willingness to share research on the development of Roebuck compiled for its

nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The section on Roebuck is pulled largely from their nomination study.

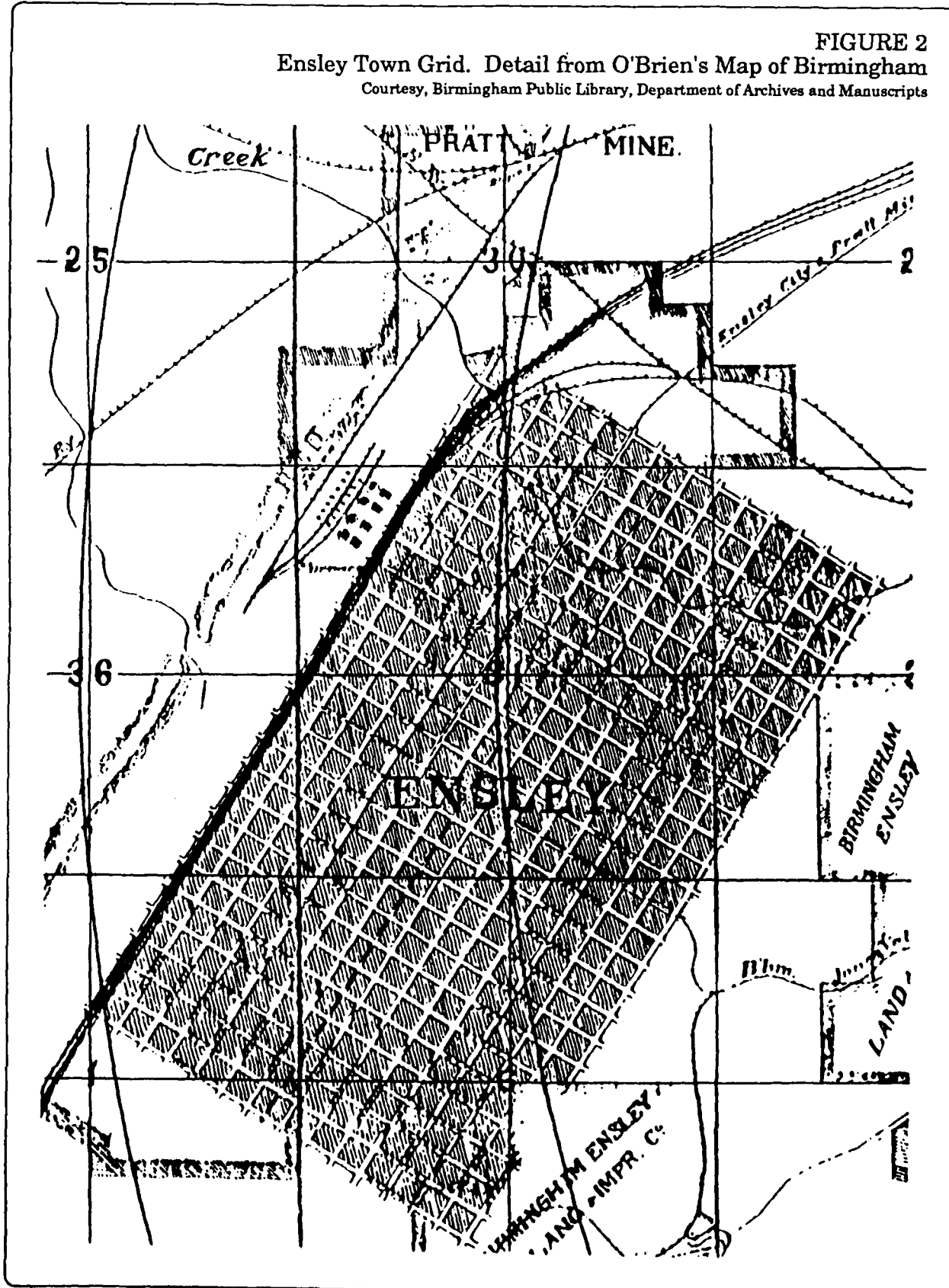
## **Ensley**

Enoch Ensley's vision for the town which he named for himself came into fruition in the late 1880s. The town site was situated six miles west of Birmingham on a 4,000 acre tract that was described as rough, sterile, and full of scrubby pine and blackjack. More importantly, it was located on the perimeter of the productive Pratt coal seam. Armes (1939:395) notes that Ensley's vision was perhaps inspired by DeBardeleben's newly established town, Bessemer. To this end, the Ensley Land Company was formed in 1886. Officers included Thomas D. Radcliffe, T. T. Hillman and William Walker. Hudgins and White (1985:32) note that Hillman had the most experience in industry within this group. Iron furnaces held by his family contributed 80 percent of the South's iron production prior to the Civil War. In addition, Hillman had financed the Alice Furnace in 1879-1880. The 4,000 acre tract, which was owned by the Tennessee Coal, Iron, and Railroad Company (TCI), was conveyed to the Ensley Land Company, excluding mineral rights, in exchange for 51 percent of its stock (Armes 1939:395). The town grid was laid out by Rhode Island-born George Edward Waring, Jr., a civil and sanitary engineer (Figure 2). The rectangular grid was placed to the south and east of the furnace area and along the railroad (Morris and White 1989:8). The four blast furnaces, completed in 1889, were renowned as the "largest battery of iron furnaces in the world" and Ensley personally lit the last of the "big four" (Hudgins and White 1985:32). After his death in 1891, his industrial facility, along with Debardeleben's in Bessemer, was consolidated into a single facility owned by the Tennessee Coal, Iron, and Railroad Company.

The success of the town was joined to the success of its industry. Essentially a pine barren with only the few buildings along Seventeenth Street signalling the entrance to the mills, Ensley remained underdeveloped through the 1890s. The population, which was mostly male, was estimated at 200 to 300 individuals in 1887, and an inventory of structures consisted of the land office, a hotel, some company housing, and the battery of furnaces (Hudgins and White 1985:32-33). During the Panic of 1893, the land company went into receivership and its property was sold at sheriff's sale for less than \$16,000. The company was reorganized in 1898 and lots started to sell. TCI managed to get through the early 1890s financially only to stage an incredible come back by the turn of the century, when the plant began producing steel and steel products. The hiatus in the development of the town and its industrial core ended as the Ensley works were soon expanded, by the addition of the nation's second coke producing plant and two other furnaces. The Ensley operation was bought out by United States Steel Corporation in 1907 (White 1981:99; Hudgins and White 1985:33).

This industrial explosion necessitated a concomitant growth in the labor force. While the population in 1899 was enumerated at less than 600 individuals, by 1910, the post office estimates placed the population between 20,000 and 25,000. Company houses were built to handle the first swells of workers who came to

FIGURE 2  
 Ensley Town Grid. Detail from O'Brien's Map of Birmingham  
 Courtesy, Birmingham Public Library, Department of Archives and Manuscripts



make a living at Ensley. TCI had constructed 200 houses in 1898 and the Ensley Land Company was responsible for 200 more. The latter were described as "neat and comfortable houses... taken as rapidly as the keys could be turned over by an industrious, wide-awake and most excellent set of people" (*Birmingham Age-Herald*, August 5, 1900, as quoted in Hudgins and White 1985:33). In 1900 the town was chartered and eight years later began to offer public improvements, namely, the paving of streets, city water, light, and sewer connections. Nineteenth Street became the commercial artery for Ensley, based on a rail line established by William A. Walker in 1887, which connected Ensley as well as other outlying towns with Birmingham. Nineteenth Street would eventually lead to the entrance of the plant, and the intersection of Avenue E and Nineteenth Street would be the commercial hub of the town, having the Bank of Ensley and other stores located there.

Different views of Ensley's progress are offered in two descriptions produced in circa 1912. The first was written by Graham Romeyn Taylor for *The Survey* (January 6, 1912:1467), a weekly journal published by the Charity Organization Society of the City of New York. Taylor portrayed Ensley as "down at the heel visionless house clusters which north and south about the average 'works' erected in the 80's and 90's." He further noted that although the town was part of Greater Birmingham, it was isolated from the downtown by a stretch of open land and that the town overall was unattractive, describing the houses as little more than industrial barracks. He went on to note, however, that the newer homes being built held more promise, but that they were probably owned and constructed privately and not by TCI. Another description (Knowles 1912:1489) tackled the issue of sanitation:

The community near and west of the steel works at Ensley consists mostly of colored people. Drinking water is supplied by the Birmingham Water Works Company, one tap to every four or five houses. Each house has a trash barrel. The privies are unsatisfactory and exposed, presenting opportunity for fly and other contamination. Many are located over ditches and gutters, which are the natural runoff courses for the surface drainage for the side hills. Several of these channels lead to sewers, so that the filth is occasionally washed away -- a simple and unsatisfactory method, as the care-takers delay cleaning them, in the hope of rains will relieve them of their dirty work.

Knowles further noted that that the city had 11,000 privies in 1912, of which 20 per cent were illegal, that is, located in an area of town which was sewered. Village Creek and Valley Creek were the recipients of the district's sewerage until 1900, when a trunk sewer system was laid out paralleling the courses of each of the creeks and terminated in a septic tank. By 1912 the Village Creek sewer trunk line had proved inadequate, having an alarming amount of ground water in it. Contemporary analysis suggested that there were illegal connections made between storm sewers and the sanitary sewer (Knowles 1912:1498).

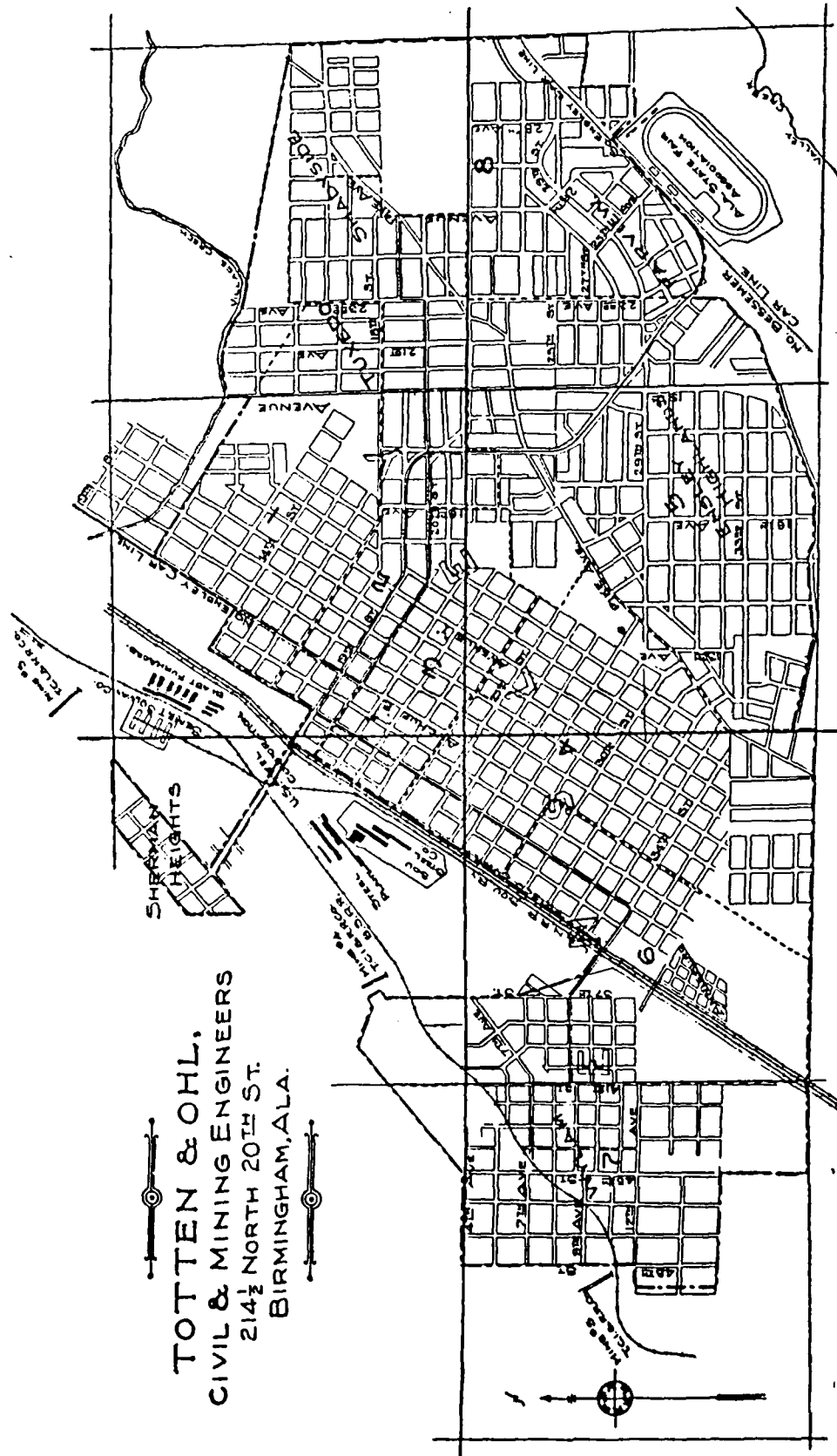
The fact that Knowles singled out black residential areas within Ensley, as opposed to white residential areas, to talk about sanitary conditions suggests a disparity between services for the races. The description of the area he discussed suggests that he was referring to Sherman Heights, which was composed of rows of shotgun houses and a school. The small black community extant in 1904 was known as Martin's Quarters (Figure 3) (White 1981:104).

The 1907 U. S. Steel takeover fostered more growth in the area, creating an even greater need for worker's housing for the white, black, and immigrant labor force that would arrive. White and black laborers would stream in from the fields in search of paid wages, and the major immigrant group which would have an impact on Ensley were the Italians. The latter entered the city in the opening decades of the twentieth century, coming through the port of New Orleans, and took up residence in an enclave known as "Little Italy" from Seventeenth Street to Village Creek, Avenue F to Avenue J. Besides their work within the steel or mining operations, this group is known for the establishment of small grocery stores particularly within the black neighborhoods (White 1981:104). One resident of Ensley recalls that her mother never "shopped" but simply called her Italian neighborhood grocer who would then deliver the groceries. The delivery person would be sent back to the store with a home cooked meal for the store owners, who seldom got a chance to cook given their long hours (Mrs. Anne McCray Penick, personal communication 1989). This tie of reciprocity lasted until the death of the storeowners.

Housing was constructed for these groups through the land companies, TCI, and through private hands. The Ensley Land Company, whose major stockholder since 1899 had been TCI, built a series of homes between Avenues E through I and between 23rd and 35th Streets, to accommodate "skilled workmen and high-class mechanics." White (1981:101) observes that homes for foremen and superintendents were constructed along Pike Road in Shadyside and in Ensley Highlands. Private house construction was also ongoing during this period, some of which were reportedly valued at \$10,000 (White 1981:101). Housing for blacks within the town is discussed below. Figure 3 shows the location of these areas in relationship to the rectangular grid laid out by Waring and to the course of Village Creek. Seventeen additions would be made to Ensley between 1898 and 1929 by the Ensley Land Company and 17 company quarters would be built by TCI between 1910 and 1940 to try and house Ensley's workers. Despite these improvements, housing was still in demand, and many workers commuted using the city's railway system to reach work. Street car service was offered as early as 1902 to the satellite town (Hudgins and White 1985:33).

As all of the homes within the study group were built to house black workers, the establishment of residential patterns for black workers is a key topic. As one source observed, the size and character of Birmingham's black community changed dramatically with the industrial development of the district. The number of blacks moving to Jefferson County increased decade by decade; from 2,506 in 1870 to nearly 5,000 in 1880. By 1920, the black population within the county numbered 130,000. For many, the move to the district meant a job for

**FIGURE 3**  
**Ensley Town Plan**  
 From 1910 Birmingham City Directory



—●—  
**TOTTEN & OHL,**  
**CIVIL & MINING ENGINEERS**  
 214½ NORTH 20TH ST.  
 BIRMINGHAM, ALA.  
 —●—



wages paid in cash as opposed to sharecropping. Black workers were confined to more menial tasks within the mill's occupational hierarchy and the jobs called for endurance, as the remembrances of Will Jones (Birmingham, nd.) of his job at the Ensley plant in 1906 suggest:

When I first started you didn't have no day off. If you could make 365 days a year, you'd make 365 days. They was short of labor. Automation got you today, but then you was short of labor. It wasn't nothing but manpower. Nineteen Eleven was when we went to the off days. Worked six days and rest and another crew came on. One shift at night, one shift at day. It revolved, twelve hours a day.

Arthur J. McCray, a home owner and builder within the study area in Ensley, also came to Birmingham to make a living in the early 1920s. A Vanderbilt graduate and former teacher, Mr. McCray worked at the Ensley plant. He initially worked in the furnace room but over time was promoted to a crane operator.

Black men and eventually their families first lived in company houses as did their white counterparts. The races could be segregated by rows, with a row of houses tenanted by whites back to back with company houses occupied by blacks, or they could be physically set apart, such as the black community at Sherman Heights. This proximity suggests that segregation was unevenly acted out within the company quarters. Outside of the original grid, black residences within the Village Creek study area are focused in neighborhoods such as Tuxedo Park, the Moro Park Subdivision, and the Sewell and Kelsko Subdivisions (Knowles 1912:1498; Birmingham, nd; Hudgins and White 1985).

A detail from the 1903 Baist Atlas (Figure 4) shows these areas and their relationship to the main Ensley grid. The northern portion of Ensley above Nineteenth Street, as well as the TCI plant which had five furnaces at this point in time, are depicted. A group of houses are seen to the west of the plant. This cluster of houses may represent Sherman Heights. This view shows clearly the development within the grid, and the additions being built out around it. The latter are not necessarily connected with the grid at that date. In fact, Sewell's Addition, the Keldros' Addition, Jones Addition, and Tuxedo Park are laid out with individual grids on a north to northwest axis, as opposed to Ensley's grid which lies on a north to northeast axis. Tuxedo Park, which contains a study lot on Avenue V, is visible to the east of the main grid, and Sewell's Addition, southeast of the creek, contains the undeveloped study lots along Eleventh Street. The Tuxedo Park lots, which measured 25' across and 50' in length, were virtually undeveloped in 1903. Only one house is noted in Sewell's addition at this date. This addition currently contains several of the study houses. The lots along Eleventh Street which back onto the creek were 25' across and varied in depth depending on the creek bed. For the most part, the acreage along the creek was still open land belonging to the Ensley Land Company. Moro Park, which lies to the east and south of Sewall's Addition was not subdivided until 1919, and hence was not included on this map.

**FIGURE 4**  
Detail From 1903 Baist Atlas of Birmingham, Showing Ensley  
Courtesy, Birmingham Public Library



From this period through 1930, numerous land companies were in action in Ensley, ready to sell land that had been passed over in the first building boom. These lots along Village Creek were sold to black laborers; their building efforts reached its acme in the years 1924 through 1928 on the Creek and along Avenues K, L, S, T, U, V, and W. These streets embrace the northern portions of two subdivisions: Moro Park (Figure 5) and Tuxedo Park. The former was developed in 1919 by Frank Nelson, a coal operator, in conjunction with Steiner Brothers, a famous Birmingham financial institution, which financed Nelson's coal enterprise, the Empire Coal Company. While Nelson was president of the Moro Land Company, Steiner Brothers assumed the role of mortgage agent from Nelson and began financing house construction in the subdivision, bounded by Avenues L, M, and S on the east and west and Village Creek on the north. The lots above Eleventh Street were occupied by 1925 by black laborers who are characterized as unskilled laborers. Hudgins and White's (1985:50) breakdown of occupations for subdivision residents notes that the Moro Park subdivision was indicative of the Village Creek survey area in that 80 percent of the heads of households were classified as unskilled labor. Also, short term residency (less than twenty years) was a key feature and the new inhabitants of the neighborhood were also employed as unskilled laborers.

Tuxedo Park had a different profile, having been established by Robert Jemison, Sr. early on and managed by the Sessions Land Company between 1902 and 1916 (Figure 6). Hudgins and White (1985:48) observe that there was a white neighborhood within Tuxedo Park in the early 1900s but that this group, along with their church, disappears in circa 1912 as black families begin to settle within its boundaries. The subdivision was laid out along a streetcar line operated by Jemison between Birmingham and Ensley and it was this car line which gave the black neighborhood its renown:

Ensley's best known community center and dance hall served its black residents. At Tuxedo Junction, where the Wylam and Pratt City streetcar lines came together, a small commercial district had grown up in the 1910s to serve stranded commuters and residents of the near Tuxedo Park residential area. On Saturday evenings, blacks gathered at the second-floor music hall of a corner commercial structure. Legend has it that many rented party tuxedos from a nearby clothing store, changing there and leaving their own clothes for security (White 1981:104).

Those who lived in the neighborhood were housed on narrow lots between Avenues S, T, and U between Thirteenth and Sixteenth Streets. The study area, which is situated within the northern part of this subdivision, was not filled along the creek until the 1960s (Hudgins and White 1985:50).

One other subdivision, the Sewall Addition, should be discussed. A plan for its division into lots was placed by Nicholas Sewall and his wife Catherine at the Jefferson County Courthouse in 1901. The Sewalls, real estate speculators, ended

**FIGURE 5**  
**Moro Park Plat Map**  
 (Jefferson County Probate Records, Map Book 11:83)

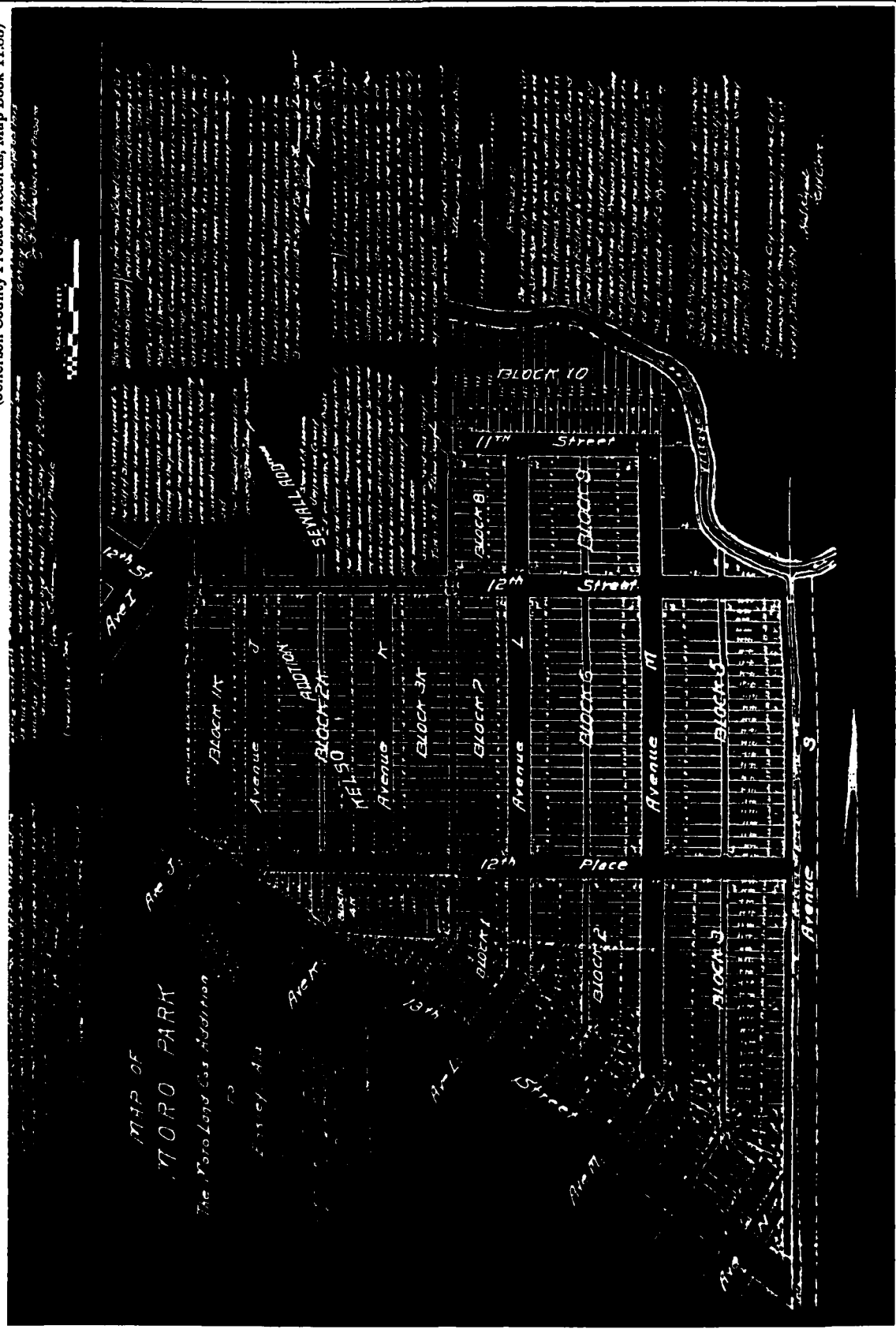
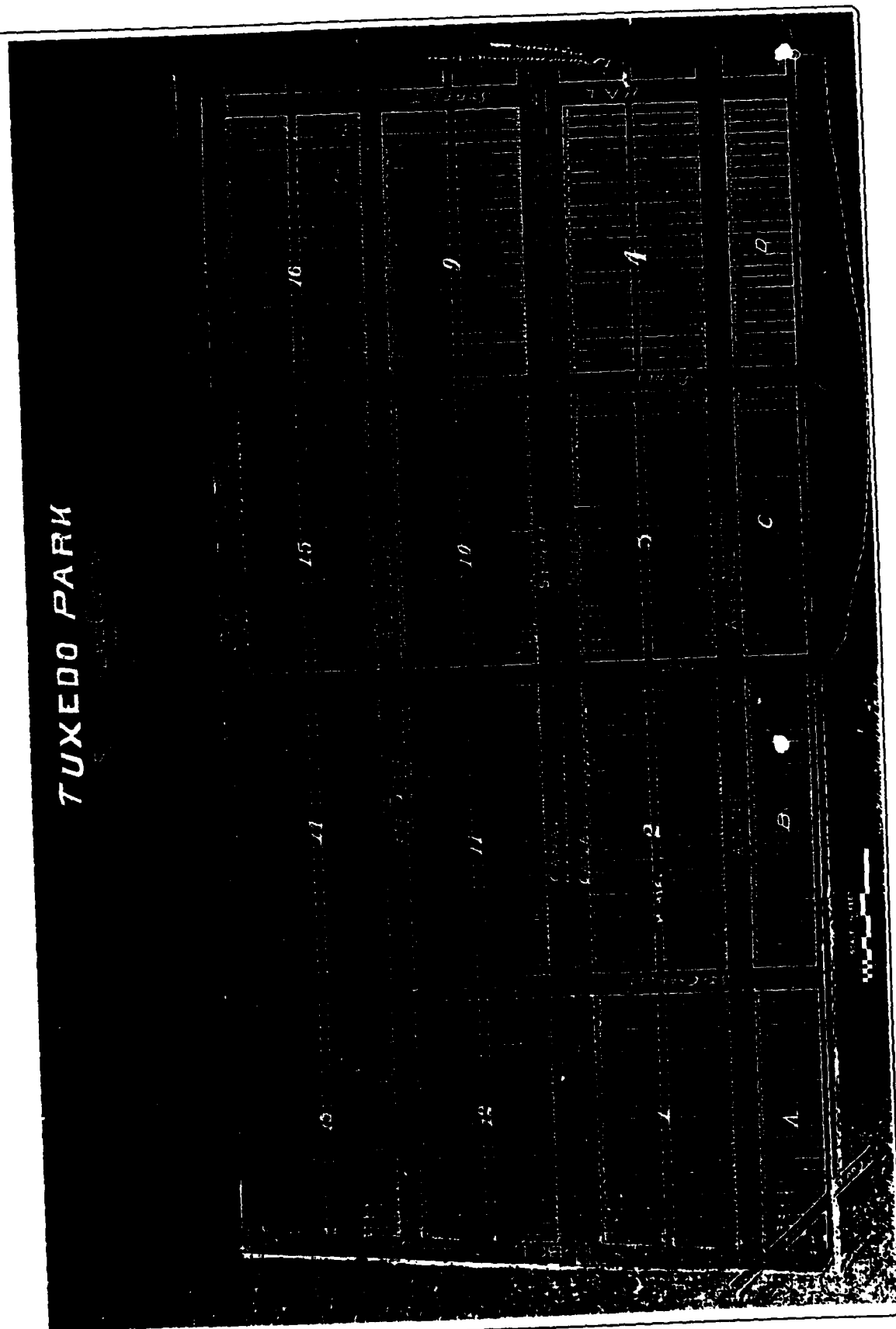


FIGURE 6  
Tuxedo Park Plat Map  
(Jefferson County Probate Records, Map Book 4:32)



up dividing their land into four blocks, the first of which ran directly adjacent to the creek. While their property was properly gridded, the irregular shape of the tract led to irregularly shaped lots along the creek as well as lots of varying widths in the small blocks that were carved out of the tract. The size of the lots translated into smaller cash outlays for the laborer looking for a place to own. Hence, the lots along the creek were bought and improved by black laborers by 1928 (Hudgins and White 1985:50).

In summary, the study areas located within the Sewall Addition and the Moro Park Subdivision share a common decade of development -- the 1920s. As workers accumulated the financial wherewithal to purchase house sites, they did so, taking advantage of the low asking prices the developers wanted for the marginal lands along the creek. The study area within Tuxedo Park held onto its marginal label even longer, being developed at an even later date, in the 1960s.

### **East Birmingham**

Late in November a few citizens of Birmingham organized this promising company. They bought some six hundred acres of land near Village Creek, to the east of the city, a mile or more distant from the corporate limits. They have already entered upon plans to establish important manufactories on their tract.

The company put its lots on the market as soon as they could be surveyed, but rapid sales induced it to withdraw them.

The English owners of the Alabama Great Southern Railroad are interested in this enterprise.... Mr. Goldsmith B. West, a well-known correspondent of leading industrial journals, is President; George C. Kelley, President of the Baxter Stove Works, is Secretary, and W.J. Cameron, President of the National Bank, is Treasurer. This is a very strong organization and a very active one. The capital stock is \$1,500,000.

The lands of this company front on Village Creek and on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, and will be connected with the Georgia Pacific Railroad. They are very favorably located for manufacturing enterprises (DuBose 1887:265).

As in the case with Ensley, nineteenth-century vision would change an undeveloped tract alongside the ubiquitous railroad into a major manufacturing suburb of Birmingham. These men proposed, opening up an area two miles beyond the then current limit of the city, Twenty-fifth Street. Their proposal was a success. In 1893, a portion of the new suburb became part of the city and by 1910 the remaining part of East Birmingham had been incorporated. Industry pioneered this subdivision in the form of the Baxter Stove Works (1888); Birmingham Machine and Foundry (1888); and the Clara Furnace, built by

Vanderbilt Steel and Iron Company and later owned by the Tutwiler Coal, Coke, and Iron Company, and still later by the Woodward Iron Company. After the turn of the century, other large manufactories made their impress on East Birmingham, such as Hardie-Tynes Manufacturing Company (1902), Stockham Pipe (later Valves) and Fittings Company (1903), C. E. Sawyer's Industrial Metal Fabricators, Inc. (1919), McWane Cast Iron Pipe Co. (1921), Steward Machine Company Inc. (1927 in East Birmingham), and O'Neal Steel (1942 in East Birmingham) (Hudgins and White 1985:20).

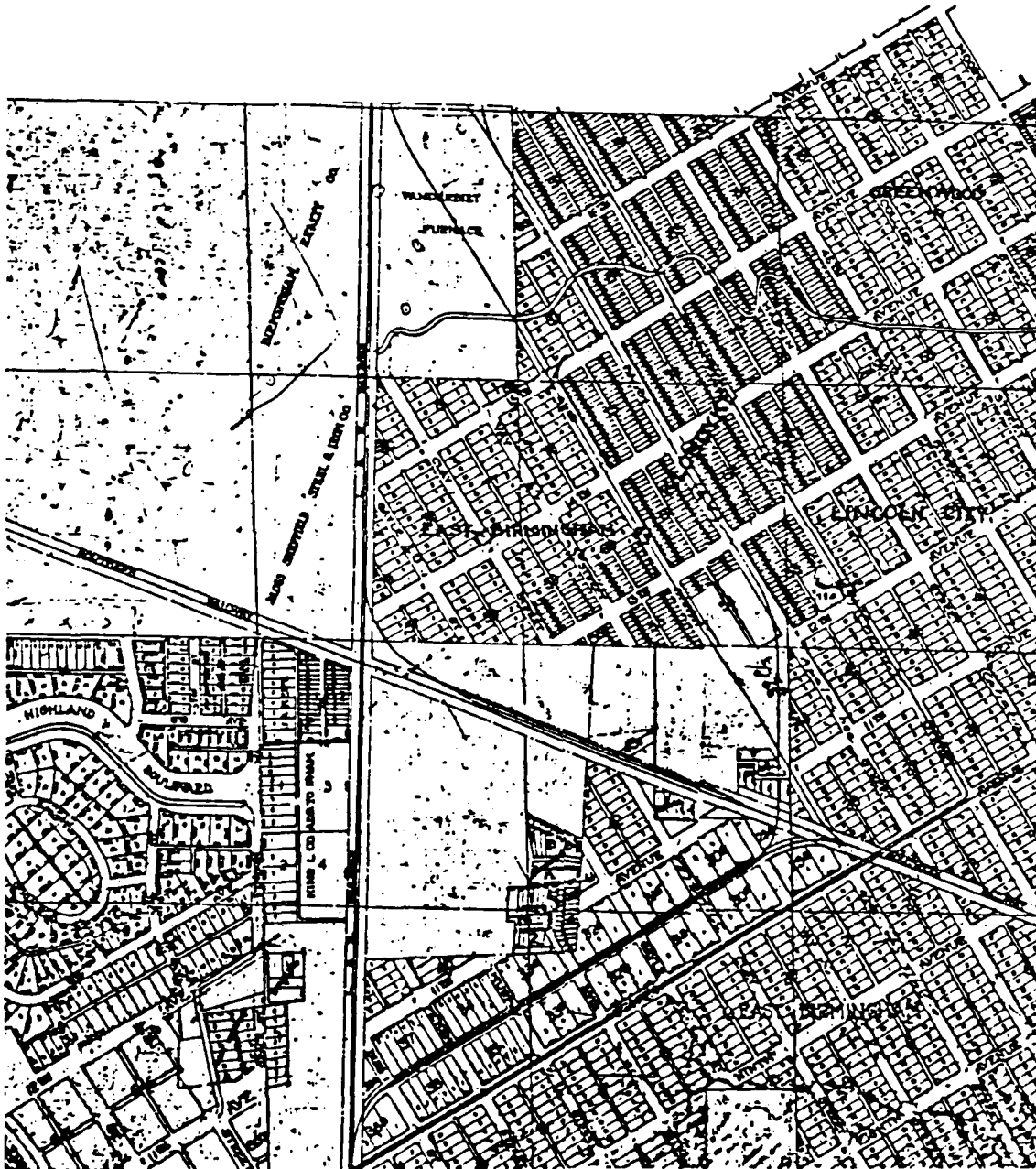
The area these industries transformed was essentially agricultural. White (1981:163) observes that 193 individuals of German extraction occupied what is now East Birmingham at the close of the century. Their dairy and farming operations existed alongside the early industry which had moved into their domain and the city street pattern which had been cut into the rural landscape (Figure 7). A street car line over Tenth Avenue was in operation in 1887, connecting the new suburb with Birmingham. Later, in 1906, an extension of the line over Fitzpatrick Street (now Coosa) would make the Tenth Street intersection with Coosa a small commercial district to handle the local worker's needs.

Behind industry came the workers who would take up residence near the various factories that offered work. The area which could be used for residential development was circumscribed by the industries that were located in a ring around it. Only the area to the east was to retain its agricultural flavor, being used as farm and pasture until the establishment of the Municipal Airport in the 1930s. Four subdivisions were entailed in the settlement of the area: East Birmingham (1887), Klondyke (1902), Lincoln City (1903), and Greenwood (1903). The Klondyke, Lincoln City and Greenwood subdivisions are critical to this study. Klondyke, owned by William Henry Tharpe and J. C. Wright, two real estate speculators, was sliced into 40 lots per block, an average lot measuring 25' by 144' in size (Figure 8). The development of Greenwood (Figure 9) and Lincoln City (Figure 10) was managed by the Equitable Trading Company in collaboration with the Jefferson County Building and Loan Association's president, F. M. Jackson. Lot sizes varied in these subdivisions; the width ranged from 25' to 50' and lengths ranged between 100' and 140'. In all the subdivisions, an alley ran through the center of the block. Hudgins and White (1985:43) characterize the pattern of settlement as moving from south to north, and to the north and east, with Tenth Avenue acting as a racial barrier between white and black neighborhoods.

A series of maps demonstrate the growth of East Birmingham. Figure 11 is a detail from Baist's 1903 Atlas showing East Birmingham above Tenth Avenue. The course of Village Creek through the suburb is east-west, north of Fifteenth Avenue until Martin Street, from where it flowed southward to Thirteenth Avenue. The Vanderbilt Furnace, which was then operated by E. M. Tutwiler, appears to the northwest. Also adjacent to the L&N Railroad was the Sloss Iron and Steel Company. This map, which shows structures, does not indicate any buildings near the creek. Only eleven structures plus a fertilizer works are shown within the central grid. One of these, a stable, is situated in a street, a setting that obviously predated the grid. Besides the workers housing associated

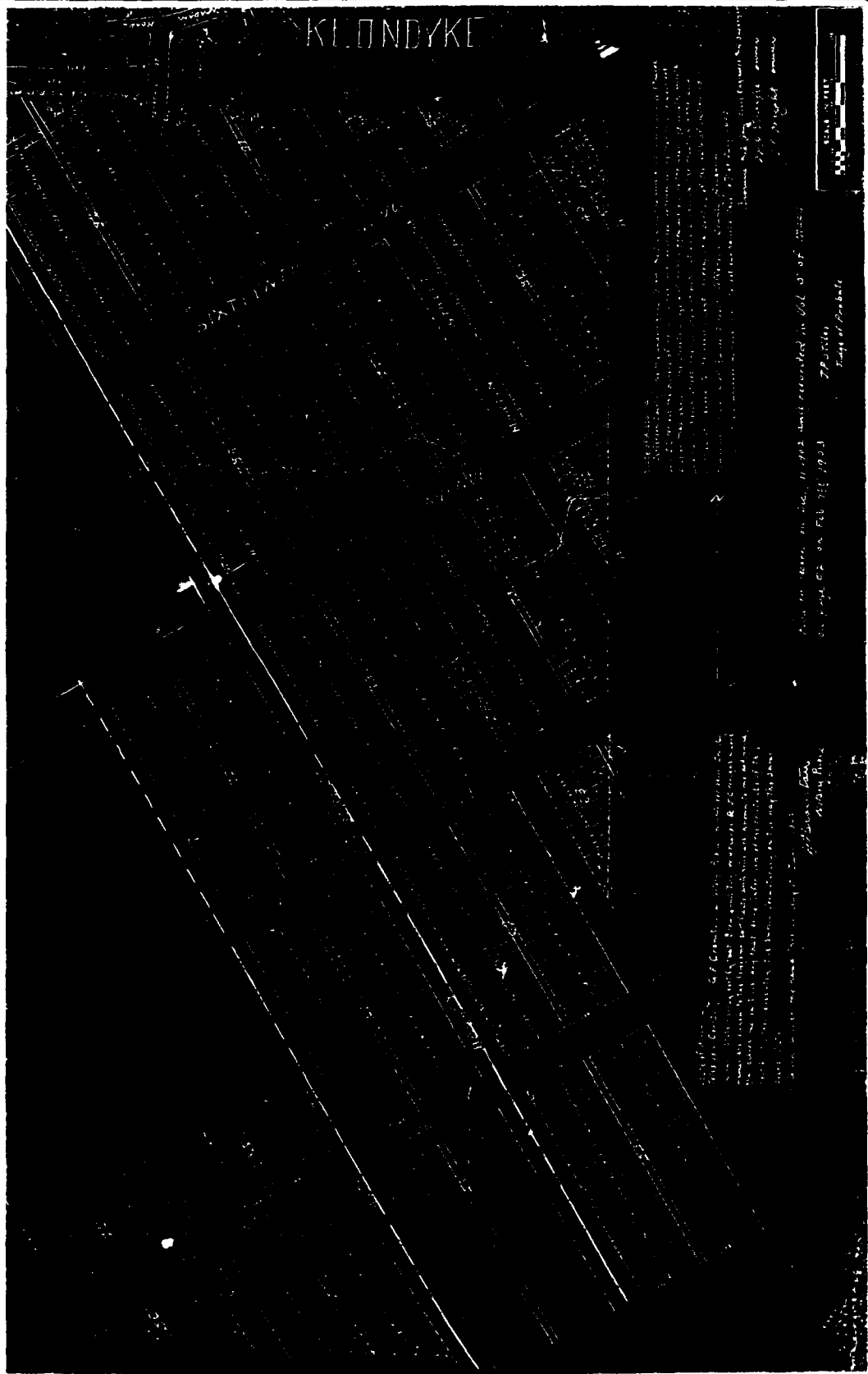
FIGURE 7  
Detail from Grefencamp's Atlas of Birmingham  
Showing East Birmingham, 1925

Courtesy, Birmingham Public Library, Department of Archives and Manuscripts

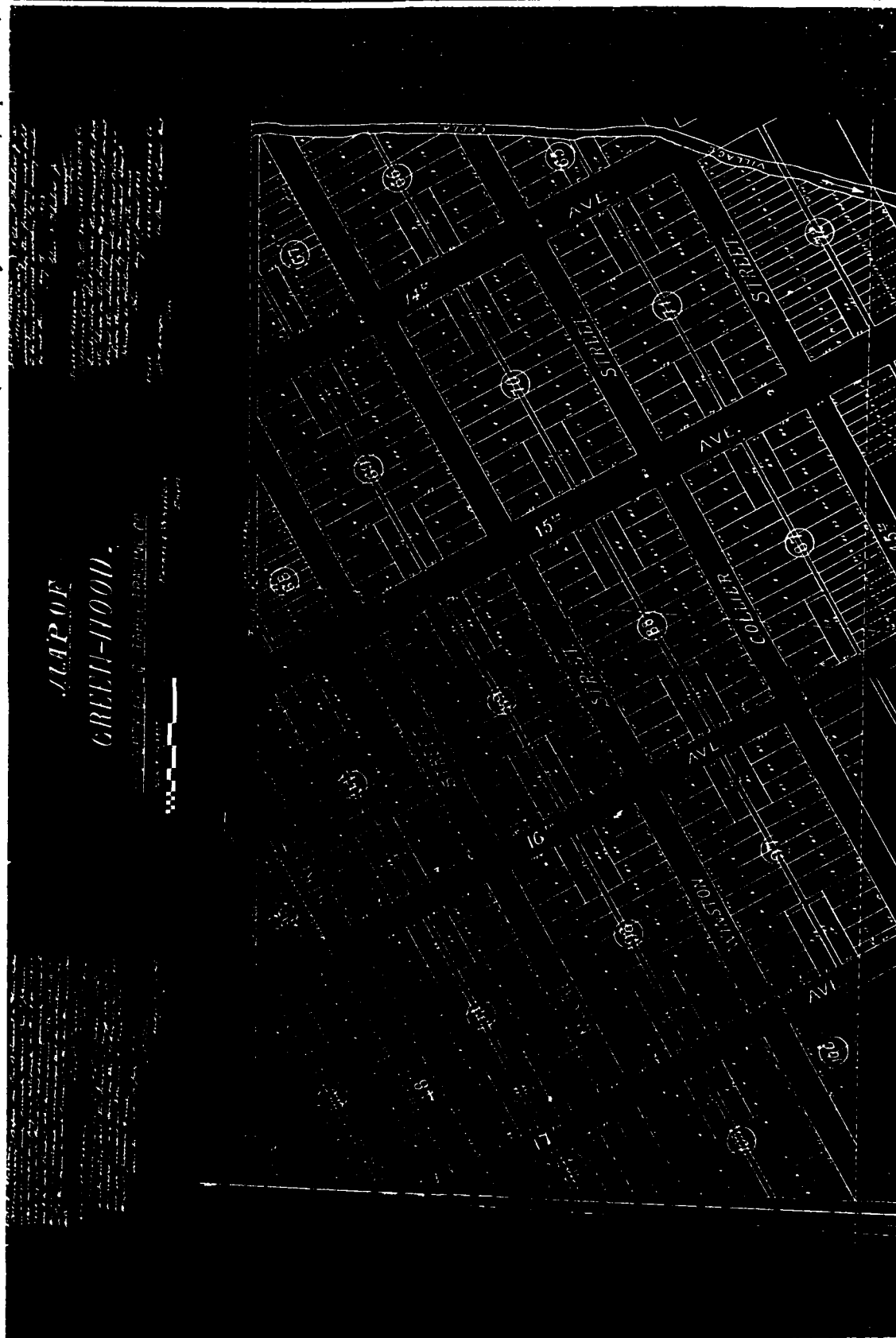




**FIGURE 8**  
**Klondyke Plat Map**  
 (Jefferson County Probate Records, Map Book 5:62)



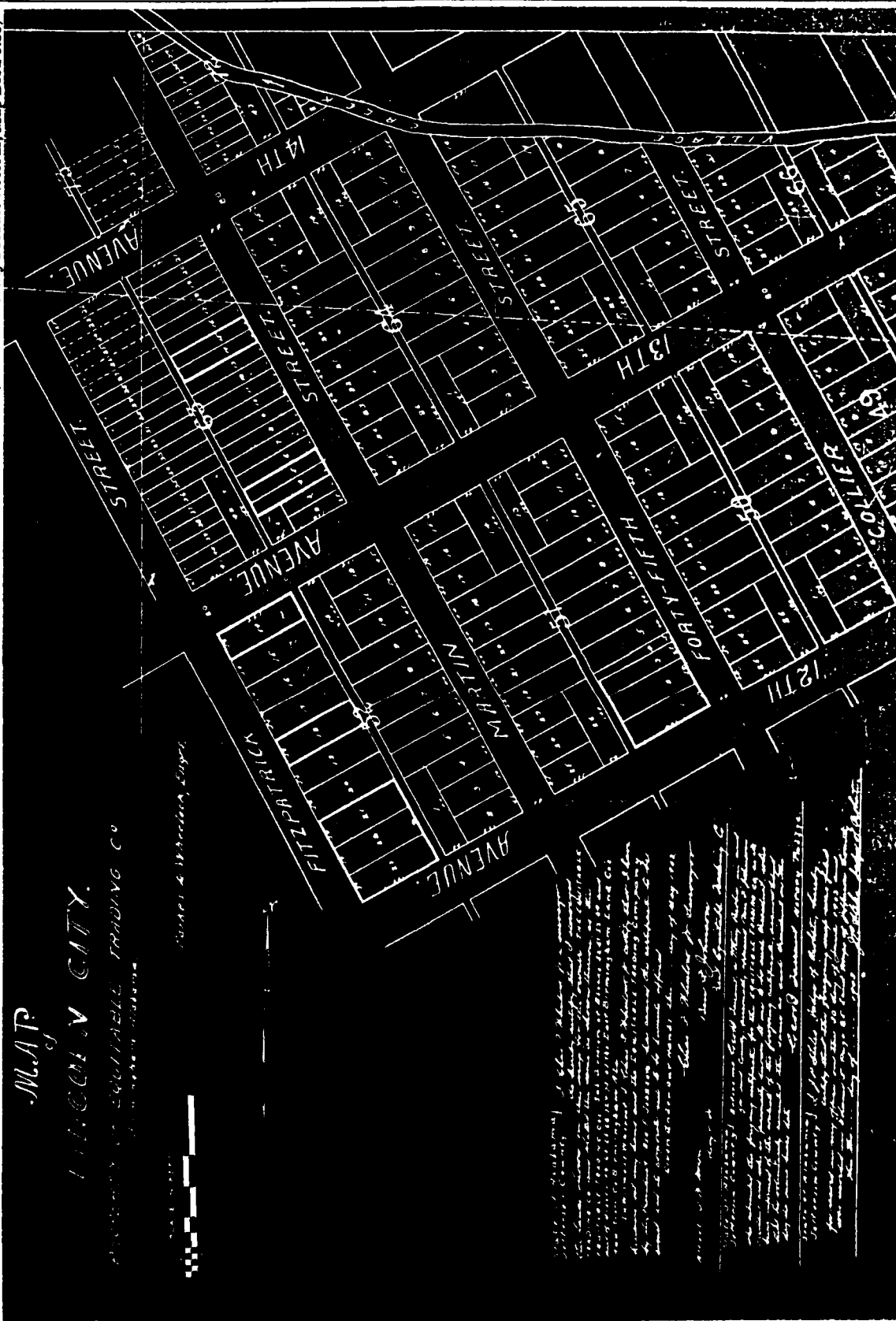
**FIGURE 9**  
**Greenwood Plat Map**  
 (Jefferson County Probate Records, Map Book 5:86)



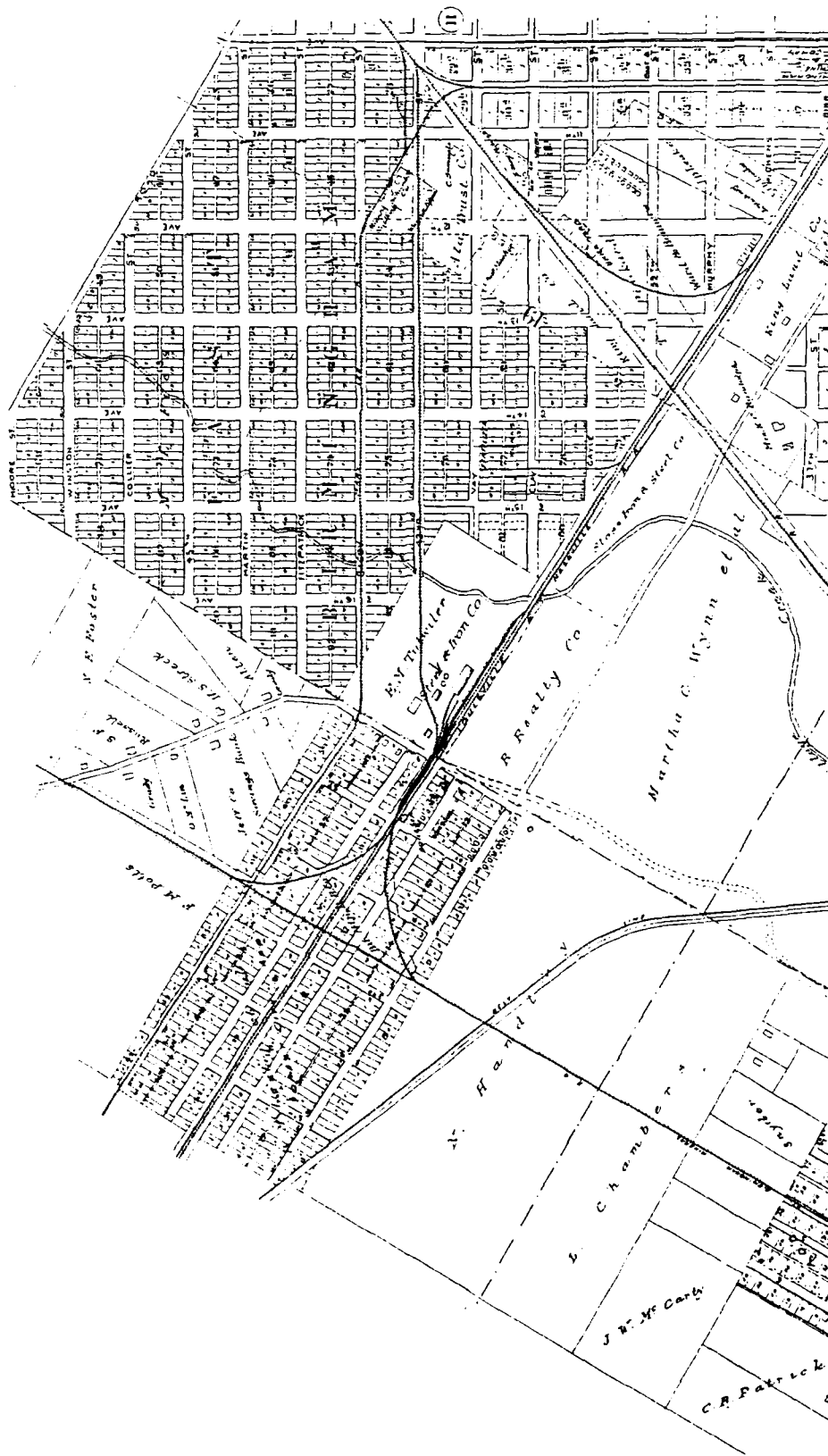
**FIGURE 10**

## Lincoln City Plat Map

(Jefferson County Probate Records, Map Book 5:85)



**FIGURE 11**  
Detail of East Birmingham from 1903 Baist Atlas  
Courtesy, Birmingham Public Library, Department of Archives and Manuscripts



with the Tutwiler furnace operation, clusters of workers houses appear to the east of the L&N railroad tracks between Eleventh and Thirteenth Avenues.

Sanborn maps from 1917, 1929, and 1929-43 obtained for the study area offer an example of neighborhood development within the suburb between Twelfth Avenue North to Seventeenth Avenue North and from Apalachee to Warrior streets. In some cases empty lots isolated neighbors in the new community and the creek which meandered through some of the blocks was strictly avoided. House types varied from lot to lot but remained within a specific repertoire. The shotgun house, the double shotgun, the T-cottage, and the four room cottage were architectural standards played by both private homeowners and speculators alike. The T-cottage appears mostly in the blocks below Fifteenth Avenue; its popularity appears to have been confined to the first housing boom, whereas the shotgun house and its variants reached a new level of acceptance when it became used along with the four room cottage as a preferred rental type.

Two sheets available for 1917 show a portion of the area from Twelfth Avenue to Fifteenth Avenue between Apalachee and Tallapoosa Streets. Figure 12 shows the area between Fifteenth and Thirteenth Avenues and Thirty-ninth Street North and Cahaba Street. In this view, the blocks below Fourteenth Avenue are more developed than the blocks to the north. House types vary, with shotguns, and T-shaped cottages clearly in evidence. Corner development has begun in several instances in which corner lots were developed along both the street and avenue frontage. The corner of Coosa and Thirteenth Avenue is a good example of this lot use, and contains two stores, a dwelling, probably a duplex, and a garage. It is notable that most of the stores in operation at this time have porches which extend onto the street. Although, there are square, probably one room, stores, others are characterized by the long narrow shape of a shotgun house.

House types are equally varied with shotgun style houses in evidence, T-cottages, four room cottages, and L-shaped homes. This variation in style, the empty lots between houses, and the variation in setbacks along the street fronts suggests that block development occurred by more than one speculator/developer. Six blocks are shown on the second 1917 Sanborn illuminating the development of the neighborhood between Fourteenth and Twelfth Avenues and Cahaba and Tallapoosa Streets (Figure 13). The creek is shown meandering in a southeast direction between Escambia and Tallapoosa above Thirteenth Avenue. With the exception of the two blocks which remain open adjacent to the creek, the remaining blocks are fairly developed by 1917, with again a variety of house types. On these blocks however more uniform dwellings appear particularly along Thirteenth Avenue North. A school for black children is noted above a store at 4610 Twelfth Avenue North, and stores in these blocks also extend their presence, via porches, onto the street.

The 1929 series of Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (Figures 14 and 15) show the area above Thirteenth Avenue northward to Vanderbilt Road, and from Apalachee to Warrior Streets. At first glance, the maps indicate that the lots along the creek were still scrupulously avoided. A wooden bridge was in

FIGURE 12  
 1917 Sanborn Map Showing Area Bounded By 13th and  
 15th Avenues, and 39th Street North and Cahaba Street  
 Courtesy, W. S. Hoole Special Collections Library, University of Alabama

0 100 FEET  
 NORTH

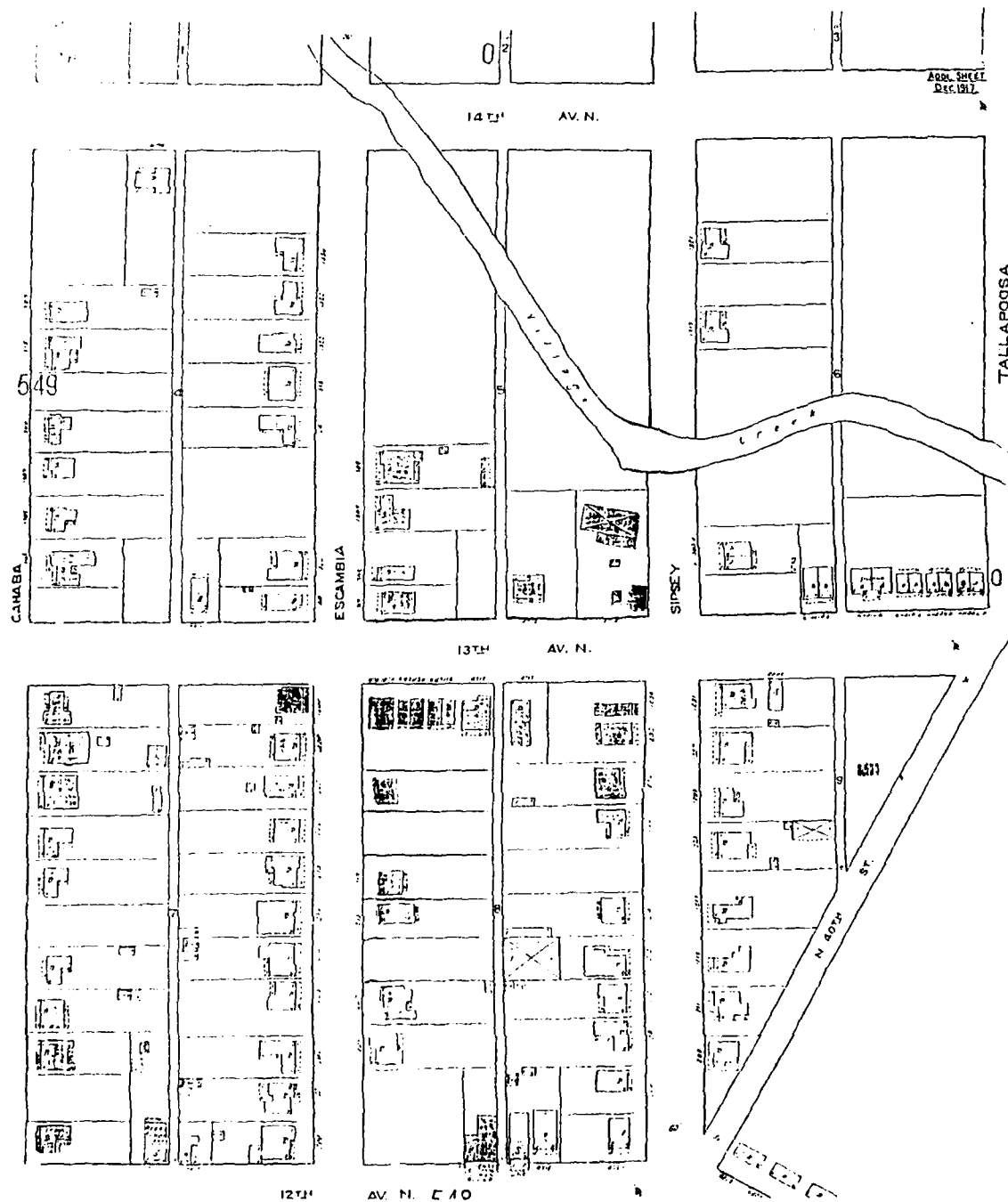
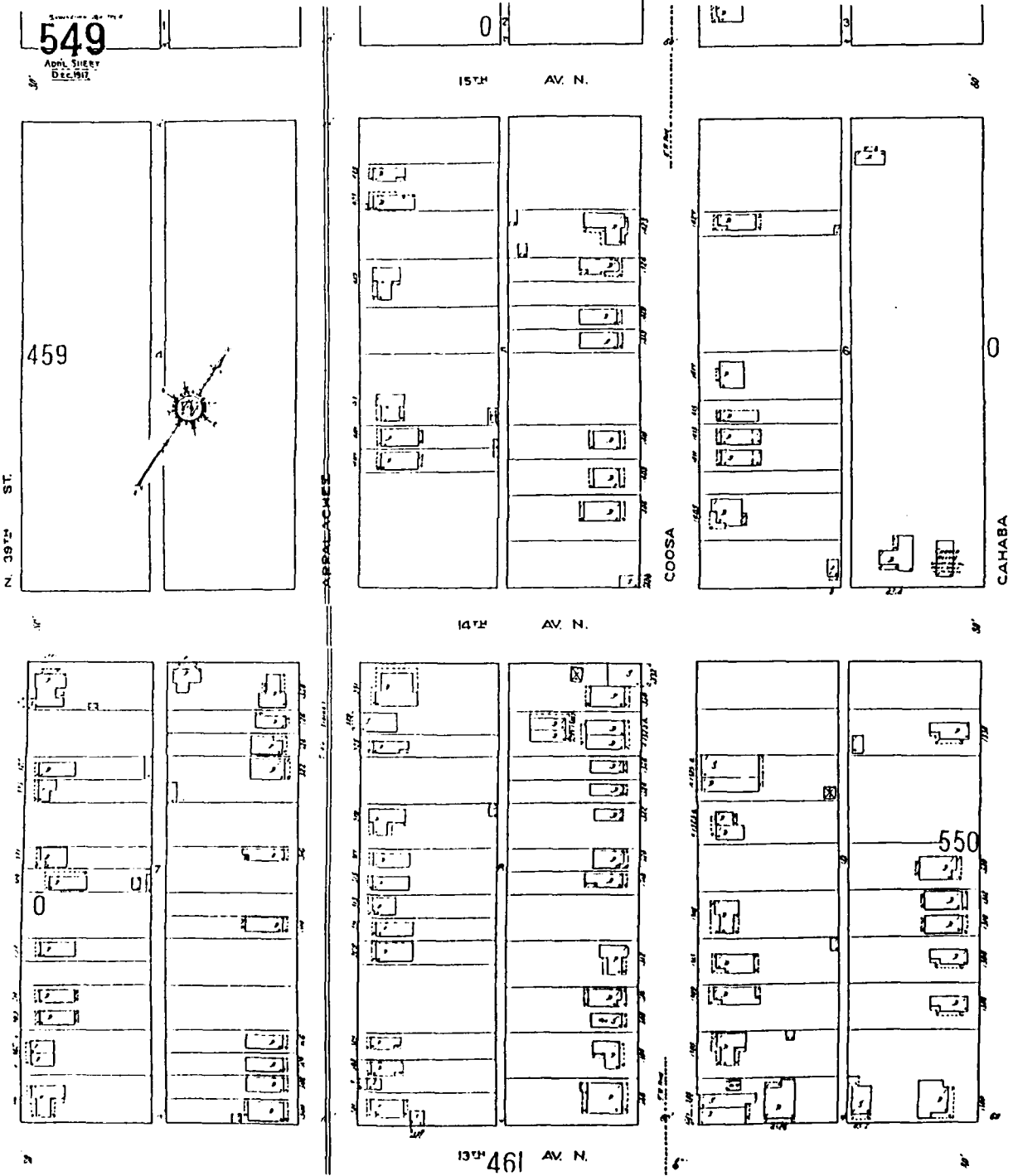
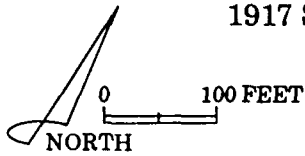
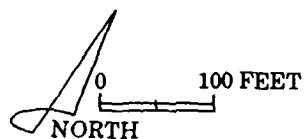


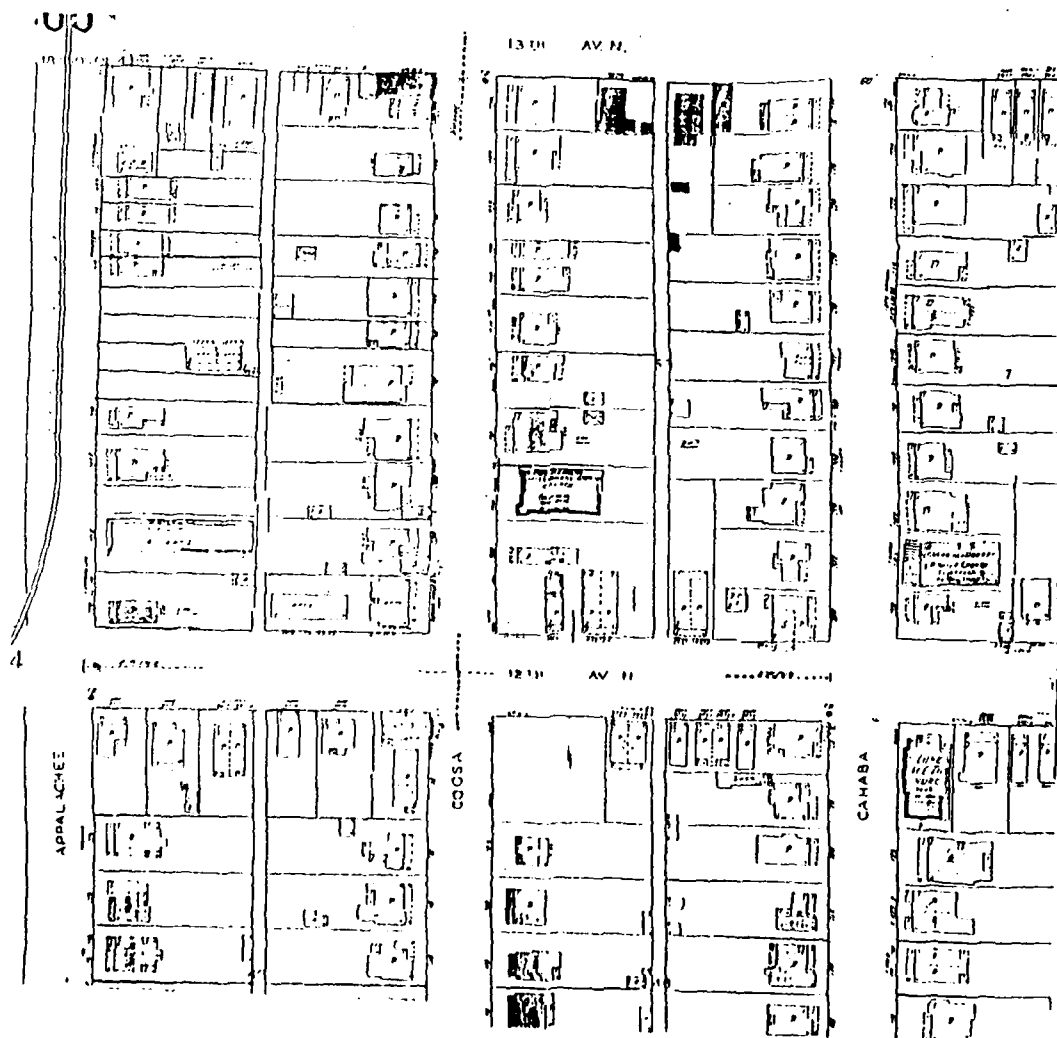
FIGURE 13  
1917 Sanborn Map Showing Area Bounded By 12th and 14th Avenues,  
and Cahaba and Tallapoosa Streets

Courtesy, W. S. Hoole Special Collections Library, University of Alabama





**FIGURE 14**  
**1929 Sanborn Map, Showing Area Bounded by Apalachee and**  
**Coosa Streets, Between Thirteenth and Fourteenth Avenues**  
Courtesy, W. S. Hoole Special Collections Library, University of Alabama





467

(545 210 11)

469

15TH AV N

470

464

14TH AV N

COOSA

CATASBA

13TH AV N

465

**FIGURE 15**  
**1929 Sanborn Map, Showing Area Above 15th Avenue North**  
Courtesy, W. S. Hoole Special Collections Library, University of Alabama



existence on Fourteenth Avenue and near the Escambia Street intersection, allowing access to the north side of the creek. Dwellings along most street fronts southwest of the creek varied in type and in their street setbacks, which suggests individual home builders. Clusters of uniform structures to the north of the creek indicate the presence of speculator-constructed housing in that area. While the larger groups of uniform structures indicate the hand of the speculator, pairs of houses also appear within the study area, which could also be attributed to a smaller investor wishing to make money from rental properties then much in demand by the laborers in East Birmingham.

The block bordered by Apalachee and Coosa Streets between Thirteenth and Fourteenth Avenues was the most heavily developed and three of its corners exhibit the intensive use pattern mentioned above (Figure 14). The corner of Apalachee and Fourteenth Avenue to Coosa Street was a focus for development by an individual family and by a speculator. Briefly, the corner lot on Apalachee was owned by Ed Jackson who built, with his brothers, a store, a large brick dwelling with a wrap around porch used as dwelling, a church, and garage on his corner lot. Across the alley, and fronting on Coosa, the 1920s also saw the development of a brick commercial building and a set of three duplexes built by Jacob Reznik, a speculator. Interestingly, the porches of commercial buildings still extended out onto the streets, but in a few cases this practice was not in evidence, notably the new brick edifice constructed by Reznik.

Figure 15 shows the area above Fifteenth Avenue North in 1929. Without question the predominant house form within these blocks is rectangular in plan, with shotgun style houses and four room cottages being the main architectural currency within the development of these blocks. This move to a rectangular plan was probably the result of the housing boom of the twenties in East Birmingham, in which builders, mostly speculators, seem to have chosen a simple, inexpensive house type such as the shotgun and its variants or four room cottages and made them into a preferred rental type. Hence, the similarity within the architectural expression within the upper reaches of East Birmingham may indicate the profit motive of businessmen and women eager to make money from the scores of black workers who desired housing close to their workplaces, rather than a personal choice of private homebuilders. Finally, portions of the study area are denoted as "not opened," such as the area north of the creek between Thirteenth and Fourteenth Avenues.

Figures 16 through 20 show the same general area in East Birmingham through the 1940s. The blocks below Fifteenth Avenue are filled with houses, service establishments, schools and churches. The most significant change in the blocks was the channelization of the creek along Fifteenth Avenue by this date (Figures 19 and 20). The blocks through which Village Creek once meandered, as shown in the 1917 and 1929 maps, have been filled in, and houses constructed on the old creek bed. The Alberta Shields Elementary School was built at Sipsey Street and Fourteenth Avenue in 1949 on a formerly "unopened" space directly north of the old creek bed. Hudgins and White (1985:12) note that "Culverts [were] constructed after World War II to carry the creek under the airport and concrete



**FIGURE 16**  
**1929-49 Sanborn Map, Showing Area Bounded by 13th and**  
**12th Avenues Between Apalachee and Cahaba Streets**

Courtesy, Birmingham Public Library

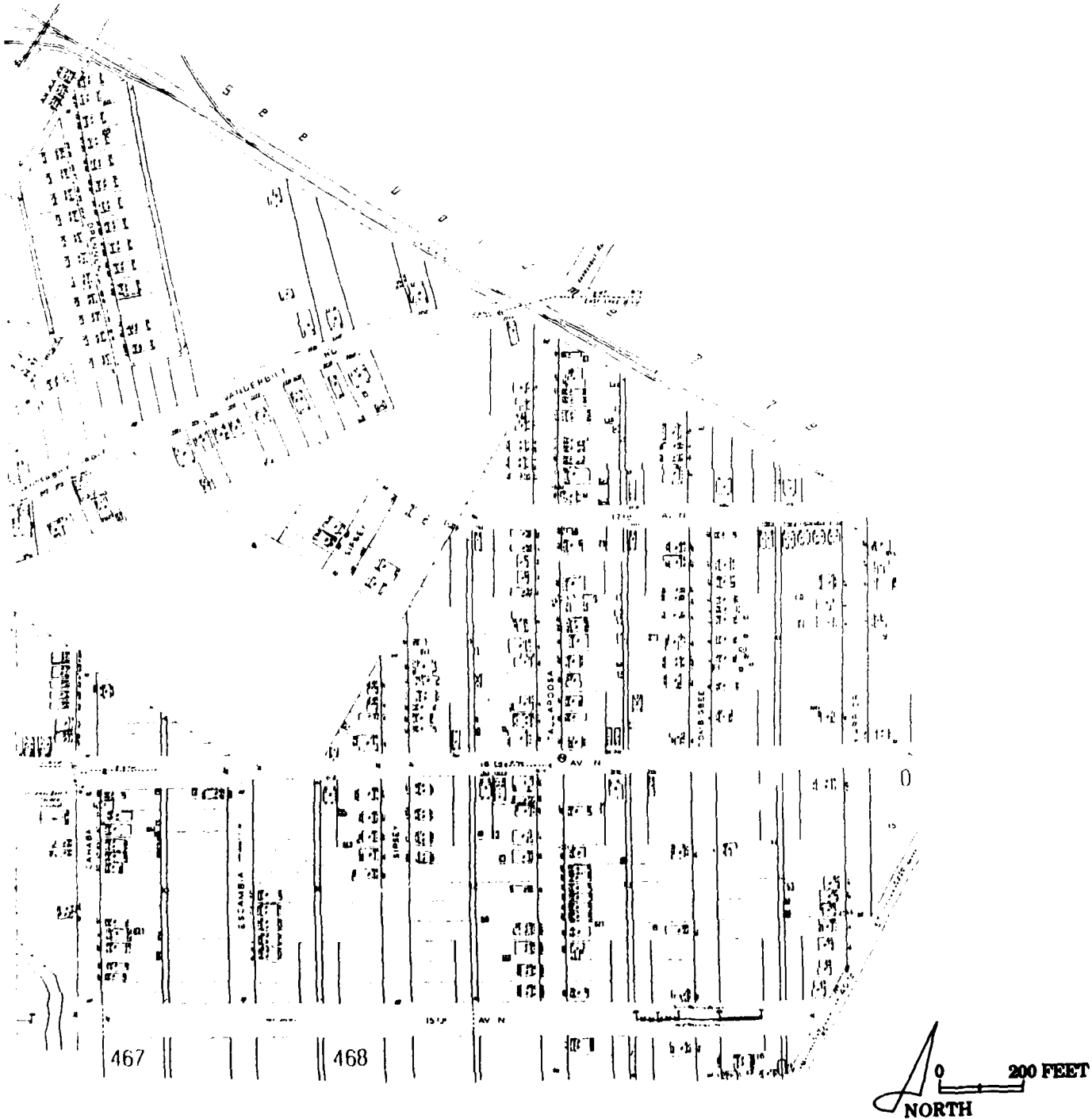
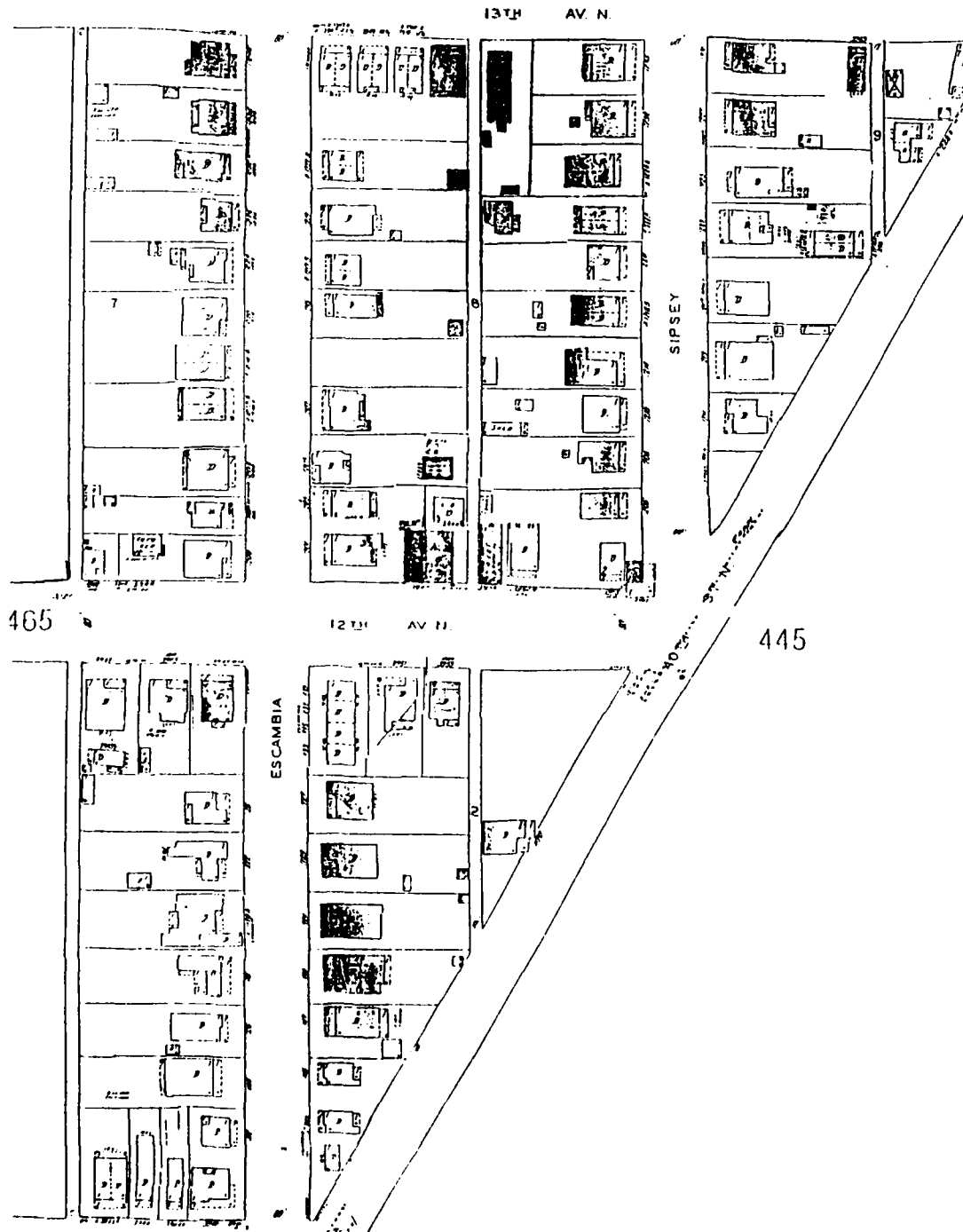
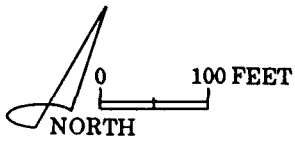
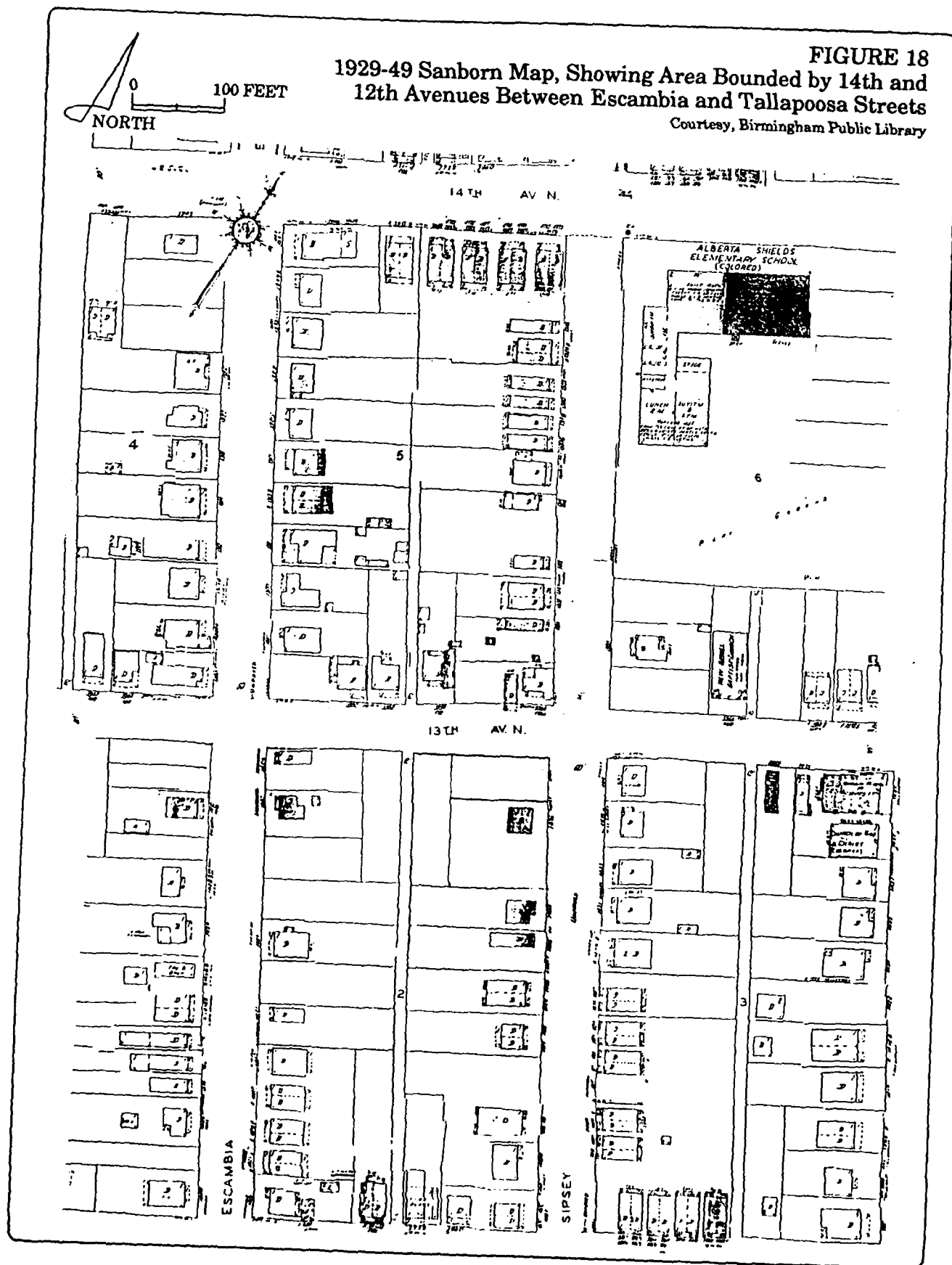


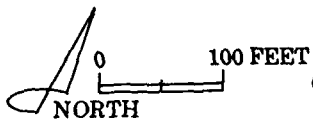
FIGURE 17

1929-49 Sanborn Map, Showing Area Bounded by 13th and 11th Avenues Between Sipsey and Escambia Streets

Courtesy, Birmingham Public Library







**FIGURE 19**  
**1929-49 Sanborn Map, Showing Area Bounded by Village**  
**Creek and 13th Avenue Between Apalachee and Cahaba Streets**  
 Courtesy, Birmingham Public Library

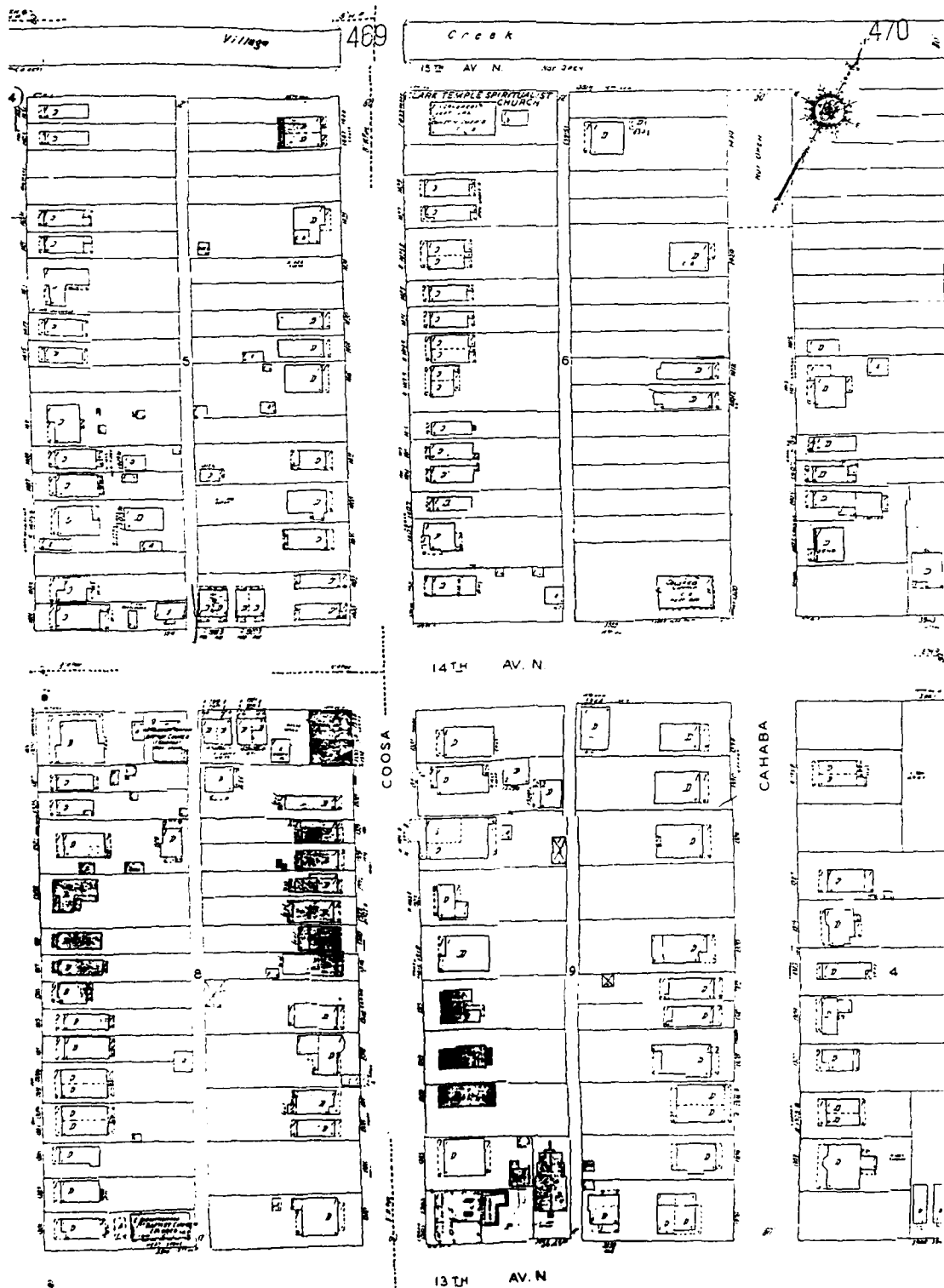
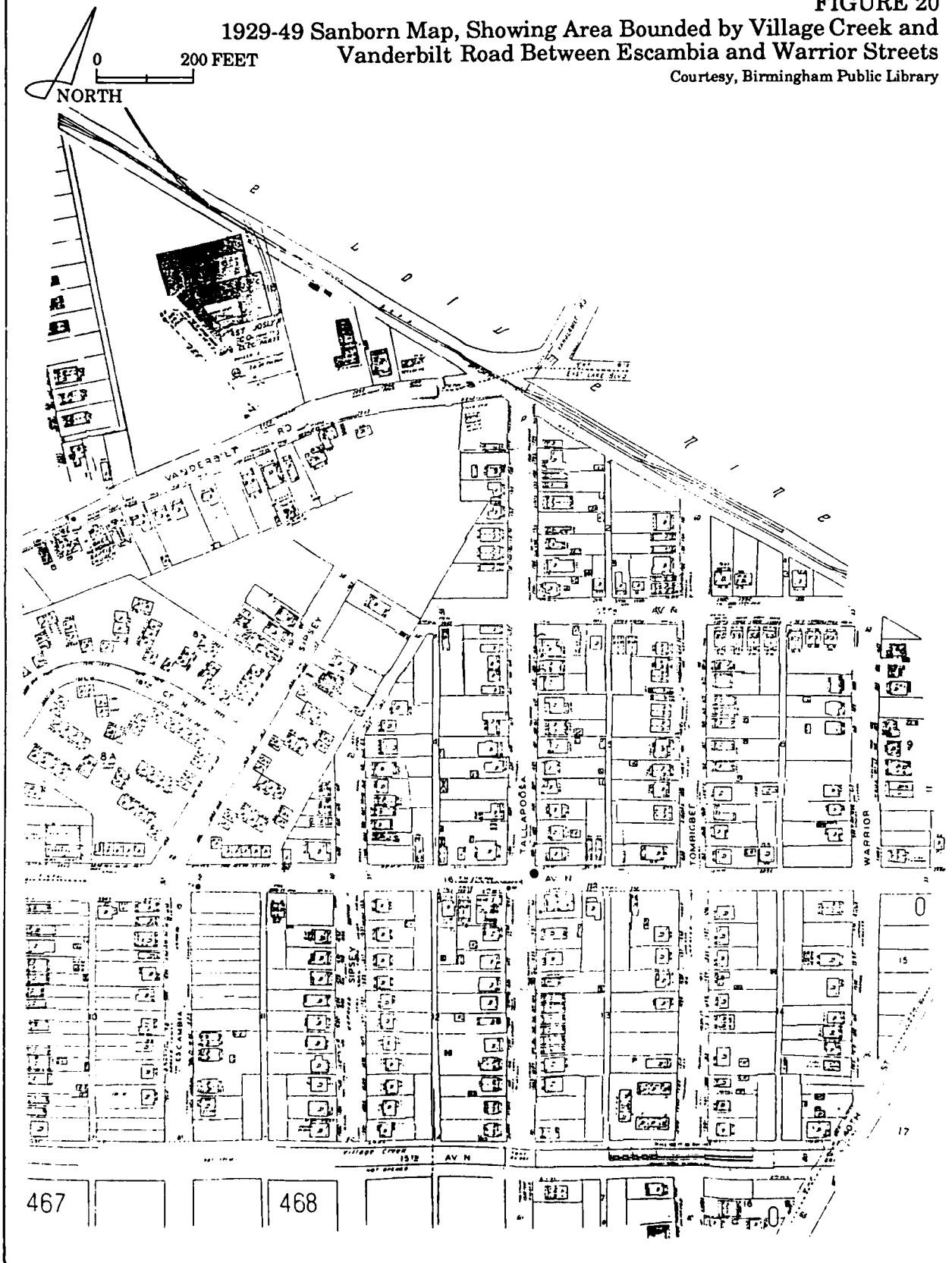




FIGURE 20

1929-49 Sanborn Map, Showing Area Bounded by Village Creek and  
Vanderbilt Road Between Escambia and Warrior Streets

Courtesy, Birmingham Public Library



channels and which are part of efforts to straighten the creek by constricting its flow and forcing it into low areas."

Oral interviews with residents along Sipsey note that the block of houses across from the proposed school site were unplumbed as late as 1949. Indoor plumbing was installed as city ordinances required it within a certain distance from the city school. Hence, privies were still in use at that late date in some areas within the neighborhood. Above Fifteenth Avenue, the streets such as Sipsey are lined with small rectangular houses. Tallapoosa and Seventeenth Street North have clusters of uniformly built shotguns nested between larger and different residential types. Like the area below it, architectural style can vary from lot to lot or from property holding to property holding if contiguous lots are held in common by one owner. But only a few styles are represented, notably the shotgun, the double shotgun, the four room cottage and what appears to be a group of one room houses on Sipsey Street. This group of styles is telling about the age of the neighborhood and its character.

Hudgins and White (1985:43-44) observe that East Birmingham in 1917 was essentially the same form as in the 1960s, noting that the two boom periods of house construction which created that form occurred first between 1913 and 1915 and secondly in the late 1920s. They further note that the blocks along the creek were the last to be filled but that black laborers purchased and occupied these lots prior to World War I, creating a black neighborhood along the vicinity of the creek. Long time residents interviewed for this project talk about the early days within East Birmingham as if house lots were urban farmsteads, pointing out that many home owners and renters kept large gardens and small fowl, as well as some cows. Mary Kirkland remembers a more bucolic neighborhood, where, "Cows minded you better than kids do today" (Mary Kirkland, personal communication 1989). All those interviewed talked about Stockham Park, which is no longer in existence, and the company baseball games played there. Most importantly, all remember a quiet, well-knit neighborhood which in their lifetime has been physically spliced into isolated pockets by urban transportation development.

### **East Lake and Roebuck**

Moving eastward with the creek to its springs in Roebuck, two other communities figure into this study: East Lake and Roebuck. Like their earlier counterparts, Ensley and East Birmingham, these two communities were first agricultural. Also like Ensley and East Birmingham, industry was critical to their development. In their cases, however, it was the absence of industry that was their hallmark as opposed to its presence. East Lake was to be a working man's village a world away from the workplace, a healthy respite from the industrial pollution. To this end, the East Lake Land Company was organized in 1887. The new community was touted as an "ideal residence town" which would blend the home and the natural environment. The advantages cited for it would be its proximity to outlying farms and their produce and the Ruhama farming

community which had been established as early as 1818. The town plan, which included a lake and park and streetcar connections to the city, was originally laid out as a narrow grid to the south of Village Creek (Figure 21). The streetcar line would eventually make the trip to Birmingham every thirty minutes, making a home in East Lake and a job in the city or another suburb a possibility by 1912.

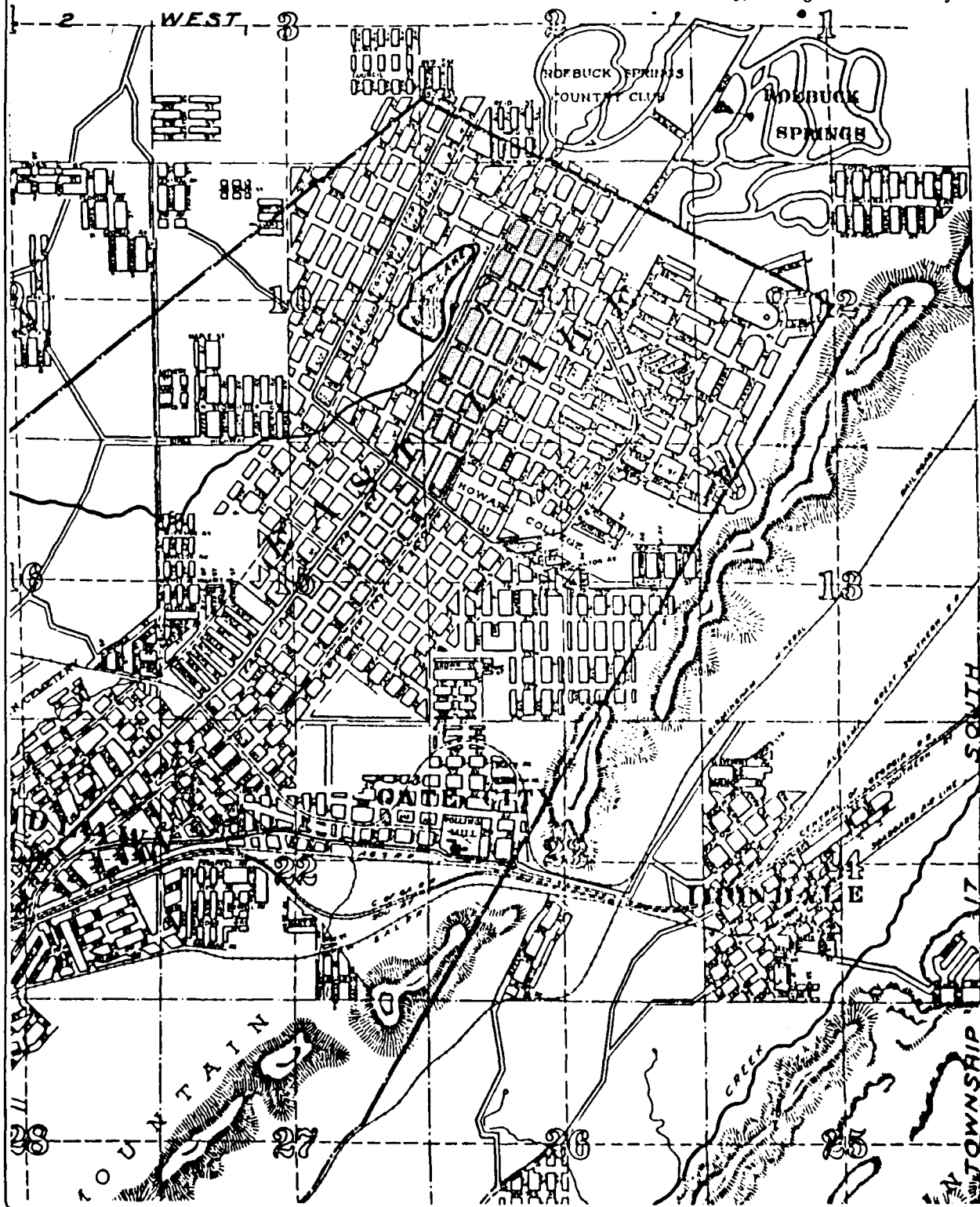
The lake mentioned early on in promotions became a reality in the 1890s, when Roebuck Springs was dammed up to create a thirty acre artificial lake. The lake would become one of Birmingham's primary leisure spots, offering a whole group of entertainments which allowed the working class man or woman an opportunity to become a part of American popular culture. The 1890s saw the opening of a zoo in the park, and during the early twentieth century a racetrack was also added to East Lake's attractions. The latter operated until 1921, when the company which managed it was dissolved. The track site and furniture were leveled and the land was sold to Italian truck farmers, who cultivated the track area until the 1950s (Hudgins and White 1985:25-28).

Despite the success of the park and lake, the residential portion of East Lake grew slowly. The improvements mentioned as part of the development were not immediately forthcoming, and the financial condition of the nation in the 1890s did not encourage promotion within the new community. Competition from inner city neighborhoods closer to industry also acted as a deterrent to settlement, according to Hudgins and White (1985:30). In 1886, there were 15 houses. Sixteen years later, when the new town was incorporated, houses were enumerated at approximately 320. It was the development of the rail lines that really underscored East Lake's growth through the first decade of the century. The accomplishment of other improvements original to the town plan, such as the establishment of a fire department, town hall, and churches, also helped to initiate community growth (Hudgins and White 1985:39-42). Illustrative of the company's turn around is the Arden Park subdivision laid out in 1913 by the East Lake Company as its first addition (Jefferson County Map Book 10:1). This subdivision (Figure 22) contains one of the study properties for this project.

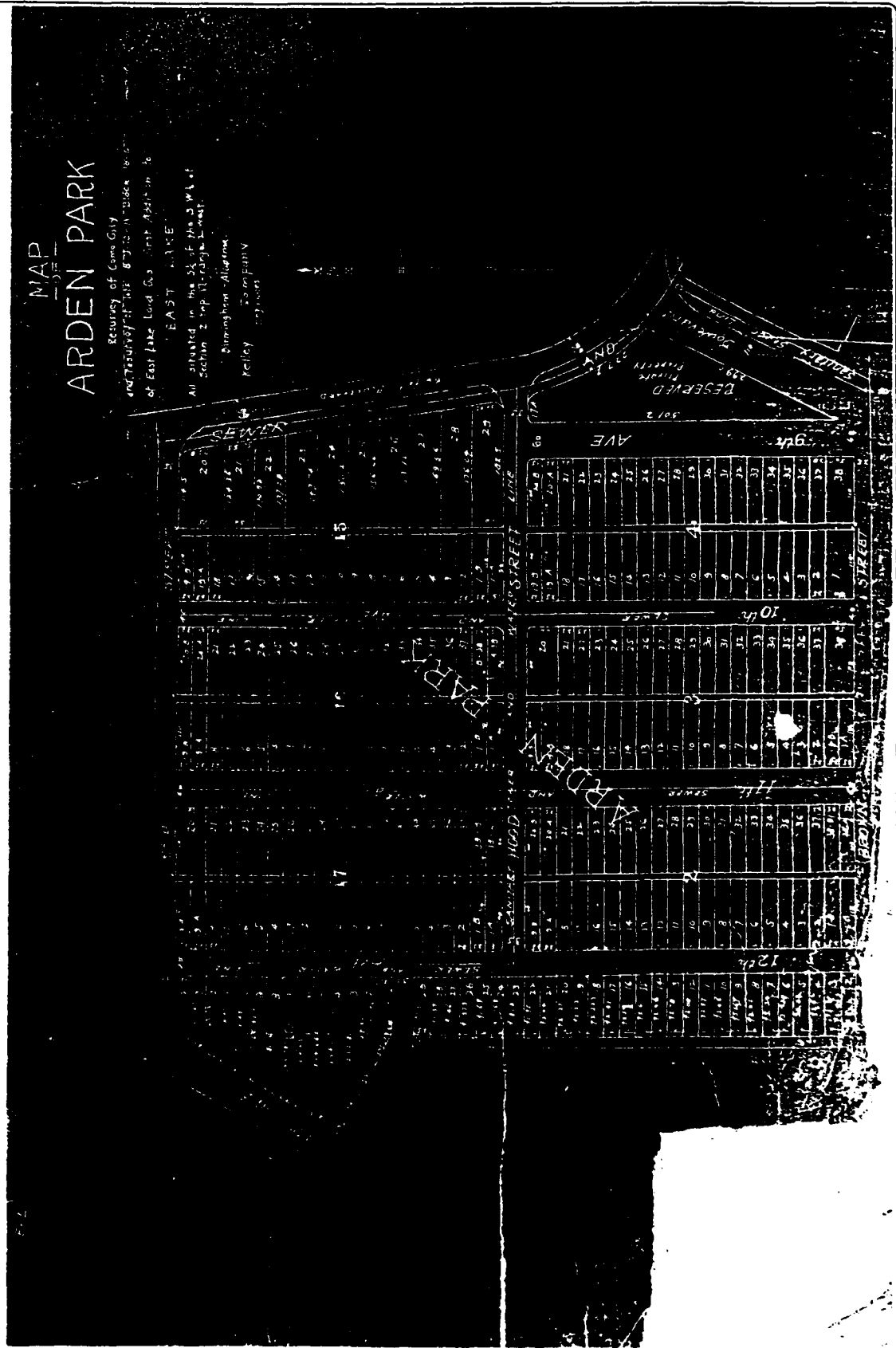
While growth occurred within the town, the study area along the creek remained agricultural through the 1950s. As noted above, Italian farmers had purchased the creek side properties and devoted them to truck farming, raising tomatoes, beans, spinach, collards, and onions which they would transport to markets in the city for sale. This land use ended when the Italian families sold their farms to be used as residential lots and as a site for the Municipal Airport (Hudgins and White 1985:42).

Unlike the other three communities discussed above, Roebuck was settled early in the nineteenth century as a farming and dairy community situated around a number of springs in Jones Valley. It is currently about 11 miles east of Birmingham. Roebuck Springs was the name of the community as well as the name of the springs which gave Birmingham its major water source, Village Creek. The Roebuck family acquired land in Jones Valley in the 1820s but the tract on which Roebuck Springs was situated came to George James Roebuck via

FIGURE 21  
 Detail from 1914 Kelley Map of Birmingham Showing East Lake  
 Shaded Blocks Indicate Original Town Grid  
 Courtesy, Birmingham Public Library



**FIGURE 22**  
**Arden Park Plat Map**  
 (Jefferson County Probate Records, Map Book 10:1)



his wife's family, the Hawkins. The latter were well-to-do landowners within the western half of the county whose plantation would be the site of the industrial town of Thomas. The tract which contained the springs and which would become Roebuck Springs was conveyed by Williamson Hawkins to his daughter Mary Anne Hawkins Roebuck in 1868. Additional land purchases through the 1850s gave George J. Roebuck and his wife control over adjoining property. The log home place by the springs was kept in the family through 1890 when it and the 136 acres that surrounded it, including the springs, were sold to the Boys School in 1899.

Agriculture remained the economic mainstay of Roebuck Springs, with dairy farming as a major focus through at least 1910. Farming households were located throughout the area, and one source notes that wagons filled with agricultural produce would traverse Roebuck on their way to the city to bring their goods to the city's eastern suburbs. The 1910 census enumerated farmers, the residents of the Boys Industrial school, black miners and stone masons who resided in Zion City, and a nearby black settlement. But the fabric of the community was beginning to change, as farmers began to shift occupations and new residents with occupations in hardware sales, banking, and railway agents were now part of the community (Birmingham Historical Society 1987).

As one Birmingham historian points out, the year 1910 was an era of optimism for Birmingham, when many of the surrounding suburbs such as Ensley were annexed to the city, becoming part of Greater Birmingham. U. S. Steel, with its take over of TCI in 1907, had become a presence in the city, and planned to expand its new Birmingham operations. As discussed above, East Lake's development began to take off with the establishment of streetcar lines, which insured a short commute for workers to the major industrial plants which were in the city's core or on its perimeters. With East Lake on the rise, its neighbor to the east, Roebuck Springs, began to attract the attention of Birmingham's quintessential developer, Robert Jemison, Jr. Jemison had purchased the Roebucks Springs tract in 1909 as an acquisition for the East Lake Land Company. The latter, which was established in the 1880s, acted as one of the premier land companies within the city until 1918, when it was dissolved (Hearn 1984:21). The Roebuck property and its subsequent development was handled by Robert Hardin, the receiver, who organized and directed the Roebuck Springs Land Company until the 1940s.

Robert Jemison Jr.'s impact on the new community was enormous, not only because of his initial land purchase but also because he hired George H. Miller, an industrial town planner of national renown, to develop Birmingham's first professional golf course at Roebuck. Named the Roebuck Auto and Golf Club, the course would become the focus of the Roebuck Springs and Roebuck Terrace developments undertaken by the East Lake Company. Miller's design reserved the creek's floodplains for the course while the residential developments were placed along the ridges which lined the course to the east and west. This marriage of topography and design and the reservation of the creek's floodplains for recreational uses was a new departure in planning for the Birmingham area.

This type of use of the creek's flood plains would be later underscored in further landscape designs for the city completed by Manning in 1914 and in the 1925 Olmsted Park Plan for the city. The advice given in these plans was not heeded by the city, except in Roebuck and in a subsequent development called Mountain Brook.

The actual laying out of the streets was left to F. M. Joy, S. Scott Joy, and Tom Joy, civil engineers and architects of Birmingham. It is unknown which of the Joys completed the work but White (Birmingham Historical Society 1987) observes that F. M. Joy had recent experience with hilly terrain in Latin America where he had designed a railway which had to negotiate terrain from sea level to the adjoining mountains. While the work performed by the Joys in Roebuck is undocumented beyond the newspaper announcement of their contract, the layout of the new suburb was clearly "designed" in the new suburban tradition. This tradition has been described by Gwendolyn Wright (1985:58) as romantic planning, in which the new suburbs were designed with the site in mind, with a sensitivity toward topography, and with a recognition of new health and recreation standards. In Roebuck Springs this attention to topography would produce winding roads which divided the area into 12 sections to be called "places."

The overall theme of the suburb was imitative of an English village strewn with country homes. Hence, the use of "places" within the developer's vocabulary. The Land Company ran a naming contest for these places, noting that only white women and girls could join in the naming contest. The winning labels were clearly English in tone, for example, Cumberland, Balcourt, and Exeter. The houses which would be nestled along the district roads were to be large and small country estates with bungalows also in attendance. The sheer nature of the development would attract "people of correct tastes and high ideals, bound together by love of nature and a sincere desire to live the simple life" (East Lake Land Company advertisement, as quoted in Birmingham Historical Society 1987). People were attracted to the suburb, which was architecturally identifiable through its use of stone and other natural building materials. The lots along Roebuck Terrace were the first developed due to their proximity to East Lake and streetcar service, and the Roebuck Springs section lagged behind.

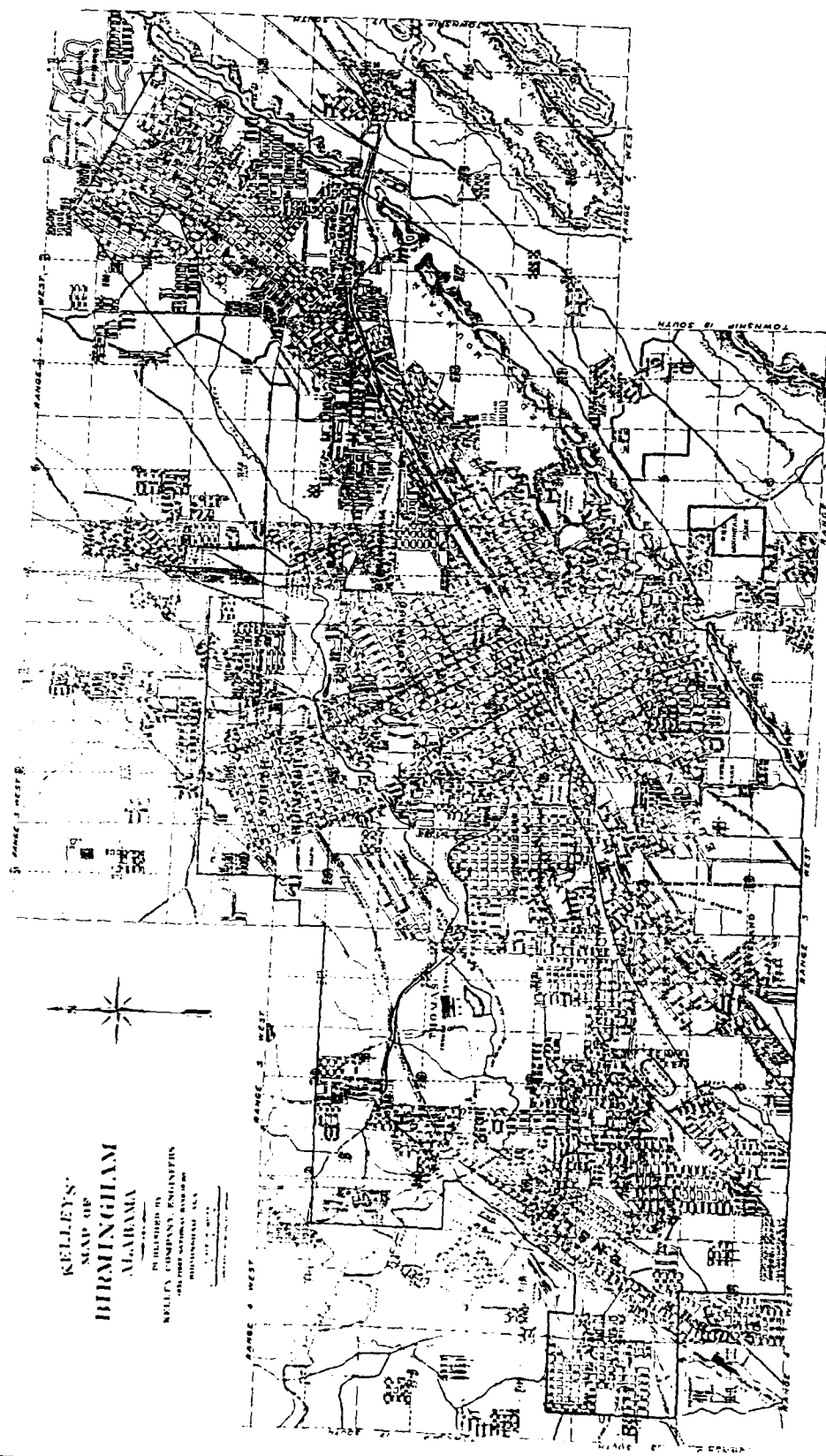
Although a few summer homes were built at the start within the Springs district, it wasn't until the 1920s, when adequate water supply could be guaranteed for the higher elevations within the development, that the area started to fill up. The Terrace claimed 64 home sites, the Springs 63 home sites, and nine home sites were located during this period along Old Blountsville Road. Further historical research carried out by the Birmingham Historical Society shows that the suburb at the outset was occupied by members of the professional or managerial class, noting their professions as lawyers, architects, contractors, bankers and accountants, medical doctors, and company owners and managers. Along with other areas in the city, construction ended in the suburb with the onset of the Depression and building would not begin again until after World War II (Hearn 1985:22).

The 1914 Kelley Map of Birmingham (Figure 23) shows the four communities discussed above -- Ensley, East Birmingham, East Lake and Roebuck Springs. To summarize, Ensley and East Birmingham were designed to incorporate the home and workplace. The battery of furnaces, TCI's "big four," which towered over the nascent Ensley in the nineteenth century still towered over the community in the twentieth albeit under the guidance of US Steel. Like an oval quilt, East Birmingham was literally bordered by a plethora of industries which sprang up as the twentieth century unfolded. As the town plans show, the speculator's grid was characteristic of each of these communities. Workers housing lined the residential areas of each; black workers established residential enclaves in Ensley and the area above Tenth Avenue in East Birmingham was considered to be a black neighborhood. As black laborers were accorded the most menial tasks within industry at the beginning of the century, their pay checks would reflect their status within the industrial hierarchy. Those who wished to not only have cash wages but a place of their own, purchased the most affordable lots within the study area, those situated along Village Creek, and built them out. The housing boom of the twenties saw the realization of the goal of many black Birmingham workers--home ownership or at least a rental not owned by one's employer.

Although a grid of streets and avenues also characterized the plan of East Lake, leisure rather than work was the focus of this community as its lake and park became known throughout the city as a pleasure resort with a hotel, zoo, bathing facilities, etc. The late nineteenth-century suburban movement away from the city into a relaxed, healthful environment for the working man and his family was the cry of the East Lake Land Company. Finally, the 1914 Kelley map in the extreme right hand corner shows the back to nature movement which characterized the development of Roebuck Springs and Terrace. Winding streets along the hills and ridges created another haven for the working man although this suburb was for meant to be enjoyed by white members of Birmingham's professional or managerial classes. These suburbanites or summer vacationers would have the "correct tastes and high ideals" which was called for in this new wrinkle within urban design.



**FIGURE 23**  
**Kelley's Map of Birmingham, 1914**  
 Courtesy, Birmingham Public Library



#### IV. ARCHITECTURE ALONG VILLAGE CREEK

In 1985, a windshield survey of 651 structures within the Village Creek project area was completed by the Birmingham Historical Society for the Mobile Corps of Engineers. This survey focused upon the communities of Ensley, East Birmingham, and East Lake; it did not include any industrial architecture but focused upon residential architecture within the study areas. While examples of commercial and ecclesiastical architecture were noted by the surveyors, no discussion of types within these architectural categories was given in their summary report.

The 1985 survey ably demonstrated the marginality of the landscape that lined Village Creek, one which was riddled by industrial pollution and prone to periodic flooding. This marginality, originally a deterrent to settlement along the creek in the late nineteenth century, became its drawing card in the early decades of the twentieth century, as industrial workers, tired of company housing and eager to be homeowners, claimed the inexpensive lots in the vicinity of the creek and built homes upon them. Private owners were not the only takers in this land grab; speculators also took advantage of the worker's need for housing and the cheap land that could be had adjacent to the creek. Many purchased contiguous lots and developed their property with as many structures as the lots would allow, regardless of lot lines. The following is an overview of house types built by the new homeowners and speculators, drawn from the survey data of Hudgins and White (1985), the architectural literature, and information from the current study.

##### **The Architectural Types**

While the motivation to build varied for the sites along the creek, variance within the architectural types did not occur. Hudgins and White (1985) identified eleven house types within their study group. The dates of construction for these types were culled from three lines of evidence: cartographic sources, oral histories, and city directories. Their review of the city directories suggested that the year of first listing was usually preceded by the year of construction. These dates were checked with available cartographic sources, as well as by the architectural style of the house, in order to obtain a date of construction. A menu of the residential types found during the 1985 survey included the shotgun house, the Victorian cottage, the T-shaped cottage, the pyramidal roof cottage, the English cottage, the bungalow, the saddlebag, contractor modern structures, ranch houses, and multi-family units. A variant of the shotgun, the double shotgun, was also present. A discussion of each of these house types follows; more attention is paid to those types which were found within the current study group, notably the shotgun, the Victorian cottage, the T-cottage, the four room cottage, and the bungalow.

## *The Shotgun House*

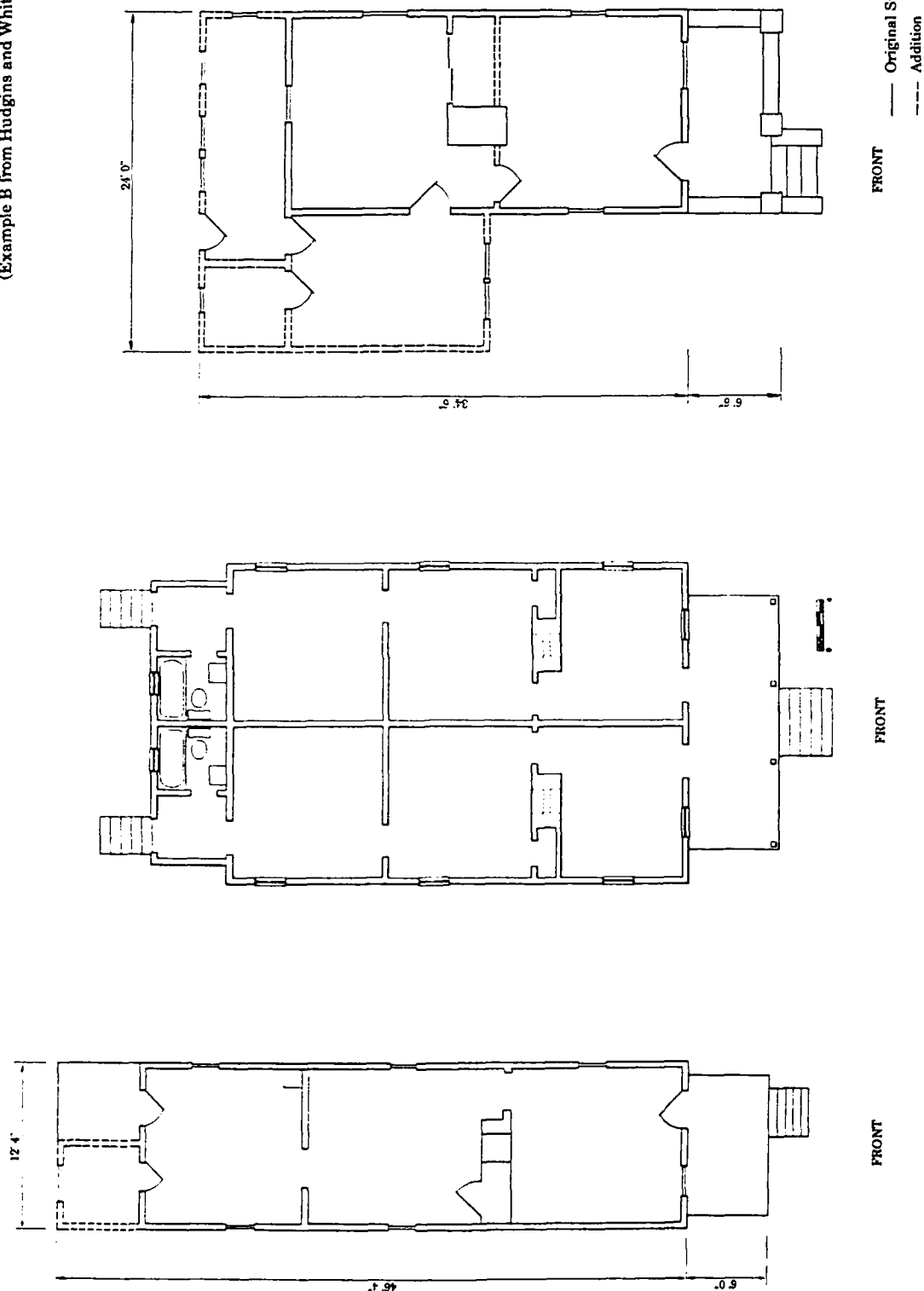
The shotgun house, generally defined as a one-room wide, one story high building with two or more rooms arranged linearly with doors aligning, is commonly but not always associated with black working class neighborhoods within the United States (Figure 24). In Louisville, Kentucky, for instance, the shotgun house was used as housing by both white and black urban workers (William A. Dakin, personal communication 1989). John Michael Vlach's (1975, 1977, 1978) work on New Orleans shotgun houses and their African and Caribbean antecedents remains the landmark study of this vernacular architectural style. Vlach sees the shotgun as originally appearing in New Orleans in the early decades of the nineteenth century as a Caribbean transplant which, in turn, had African antecedents. This house type became accepted within the New Orleans folk architectural repertoire.

The utility of its design as an economic rental house type was recognized by the 1870s. One byproduct of this recognition was the shotgun's acceptance as an industrial housing type during the period when Southern industry began to develop in the late nineteenth century. Phillips (1963:178-179) notes the popularity of shotgun housing with Louisiana lumber companies in the 1880s and 1890s, filling a need for temporary housing for workers. The shotgun house was also a reusable domestic resource, since they could be moved intact on railroad cars to the next campsite as needed. A different association was made for the form by Eugene Wilson in his study of Alabama Folk Houses (1975:50). Wilson discussed the fact that shotguns were used not only as residences, but also were favored for small commercial establishments or for use as a small professional office. He illustrates this use with a photograph of a shotgun which functioned as a post office. Hence, after the introduction and acceptance of the shotgun as a folk type, it appears to have been recognized as a desirable house form for lower economic housing and as well as an acceptable commercial space in Alabama. While generally considered to be a Southern house style, the shotgun move westward along with American industry, particularly the railroad.

The hallmark of the shotgun, according to Vlach, is the placement of the gable end of the building so that it faces the street. This single feature was a major departure from the canon of American folk house types and occurs whether the shotgun is located in a confined urban context or a spacious rural site. The house is usually constructed without a hallway, with one room stacked behind the other. In a three room example, the front room is typically used as a living room, the interior room as a bedroom, and the back room as a kitchen. In terms of form, Vlach (1975:29) has noted the myriad variations within the type as determined by size, detail, interior and exterior door spacing, roof, porch, etc. Even the number of rooms is variable. Vlach cites two rooms as the minimum, while other sources suggest that a typical shotgun must have three rooms (Preservation Alliance 1980:5). The length and width of the shotgun is equally variable. Like an expanding telescope, some shotguns have room after room stacked behind one another. While Vlach notes that widths can and do vary, the form is distinctively narrow, and a ratio of 1:3 might be posited between width

FIGURE 24

Shotgun House Plans  
A - Single Shotgun, B - Double Shotgun, C - Two-Room Shotgun with Side Ell Addition  
(Example B from Hudgins and White 1985)



versus length. Three recognized subtypes are: (1) the camelback shotgun, a shotgun with a two story rear section; (2) the double shotgun, two single shotguns built side by side and covered by a single roof; and (3) the shotgun with a hallway and Victorian detailing (Vlach 1978:131).

Significantly, Vlach discusses how occupants of the house type view the shotgun as a house without privacy due to the internal arrangement of small rooms which are all directly connected. The internal openings within the shotgun are usually aligned or "in rhythm" with one another, but in the New Orleans examples and elsewhere, internal openings are sometimes zigzagged throughout the structure. This accounts for the use of the term shotgun as a shot was supposed to be able to pass right through the length of the house. This directness or openness contributes to what Vlach sees as the African legacy of the house. When a hallway is added to the house, this openness was interrupted (Vlach 1978:131):

Each room then became a place of privacy and isolation, and the ideal of intimacy which had been part of the house's design for more than two centuries was finally subverted. The house could, however, be more successfully lived in by people reared in a culture where individual privacy was highly prized. The addition of hallways to shotgun houses apparently came at a point when Whites adopted them as suitable dwelling forms.

Vlach goes on to note that the majority of the shotguns constructed in the late nineteenth century did not adopt the hall plan for the shotgun but stayed with the earlier floor plan.

A study of over 5,000 shotgun style houses built in Louisville, Kentucky, between the Civil War and 1910 offers some comparative data (Preservation Alliance 1980). Like Birmingham, Louisville strove to develop into an industrial center after the Civil War. For example, the number of factories swelled from 436 in 1860 to 1,108 twenty years later. This expansion of the economic base fostered changes in the city's population, as immigrants from Italy, Germany, Scotland, and Switzerland became part of Louisville's work force. These immigrant workers, as well as black workers, were housed in the new outlying neighborhoods of Louisville such as Portland, Butchertown, and Russell, which were connected to the city via a newly established street railway system. Like the northeastern row home, the streets of these neighborhoods were knit with rows of shotgun houses. The survey noted that 60 percent of the shotguns surveyed are situated adjacent to other shotgun houses. Many of the blocks are occupied by series of identical houses, suggesting a common date of construction and builder.

Wood, brick, and stone were the materials used to construct Louisville's shotgun houses. Over half were frame buildings, while 15 percent were brick. Notably, the Louisville shotguns are organized to allow privacy; side entries never face one another, and the houses are arranged with opposing windowed and windowless side elevations, so that the windowless side faces the windowed

elevation of the adjoining house. Three out of four shotguns are single story examples. Sixty percent of the survey houses have two front windows; 73 percent of the windows are "strongly vertical," the remainder have a "strongly horizontal line" (Preservation Alliance 1980:10-11). Fifty percent of the shotguns have no front porch, while 40 percent had full front porches. The remainder had partial front porches. The full front porches appeared in many cases to be later additions. Eighty-five percent of the houses have a front yard setback of at least six feet, and 40 percent of the sample were fenced in some manner. Finally, while no numbers were given, many of the houses are decorated with stained glass windows and gingerbread detailing about the door and under the eaves. While the presence of this detailing suggests that the Louisville examples may be characterized as the Victorian version of the shotgun as defined by Vlach, the floor plans included indicate that Louisville's shotguns were built without hallways.

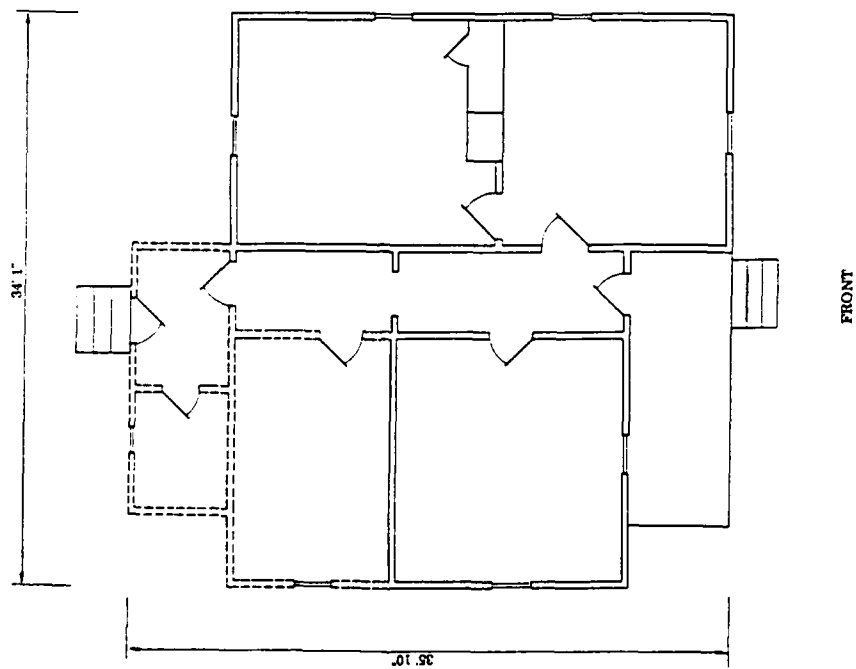
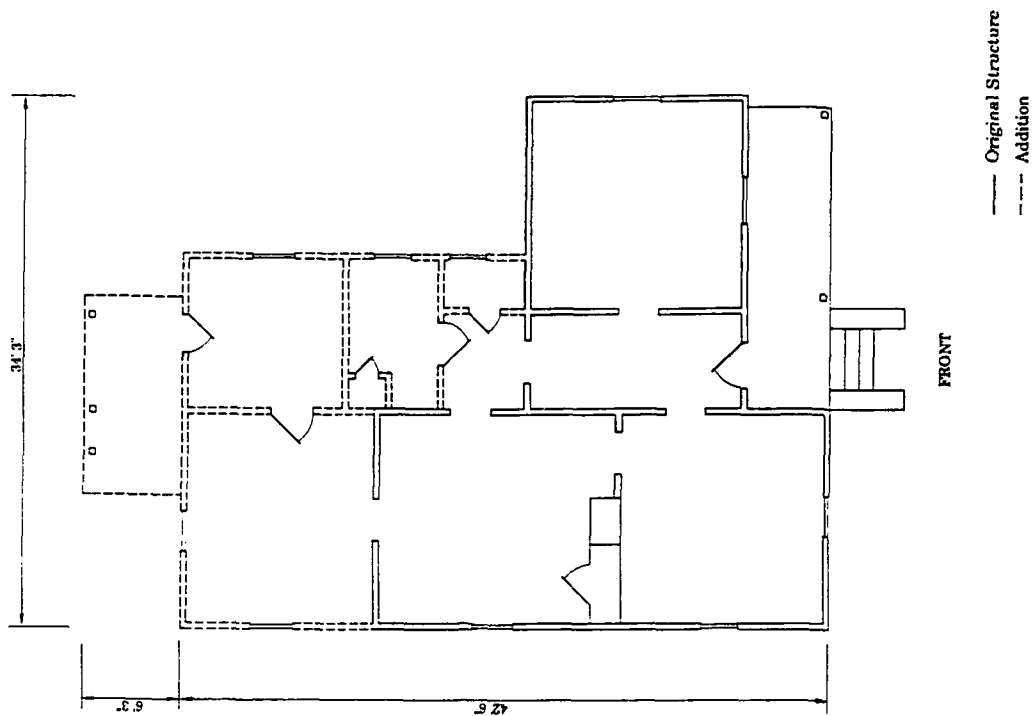
The 1985 Village Creek survey was a windshield survey of the project area in Birmingham. Thus, given the difference in the level of effort, many of the features noted of the Louisville shotgun houses could not be observed for the Birmingham examples. The first major difference between the two cities is that the shotgun does not appear in block length rows in the two working class communities surveyed, Ensley and East Birmingham. Perusal of the historic Sanborn Fire Insurance maps of East Birmingham indicates that while up to six shotguns may be found side by side, this is the architectural exception rather than the rule. Thus while the shotgun was considered to be the most persistent house type (177 out of 604 structures) within the Village Creek survey area, it was interspersed between other house types.

Hudgins and White (1985) characterize the shotguns within the survey area as being wood framed on brick piers, and covered with clapboard or board and batten siding. One exception to this was a cinder block shotgun constructed in East Birmingham. Roof types include front facing gables and hipped roofs. When the latter was employed, the full, front porch was covered by a shed roof. The front door, which is usually off-center, faces the street. The Birmingham examples in this study group usually had opposing windows and little if any exterior detailing. When bathrooms and porches were added to the rear, they were usually offset. Dates of construction for the single shotguns range from 1909 to the mid 1970s, whereas the duplex variant, the double shotgun, ranges from 1909 to the mid 1960s with a intensive period of construction between 1924 and 1928. The latter, which can have a full front porch or two gabled porches covering each doorway, is referred to as a "double house" or "two tenant house" by residents of the area.

### *The T-Shaped Cottage*

In plan, this house type is composed of three rooms in a T configuration (Figure 25). In the study examples, two square rooms are connected to a rectangular room by a central hall or passageway. Two intersecting gables cover the structure; the longer gable roof, which covers the hall and single room, faces

**FIGURE 25**  
**Examples of T-shaped Cottages with Rear Additions**



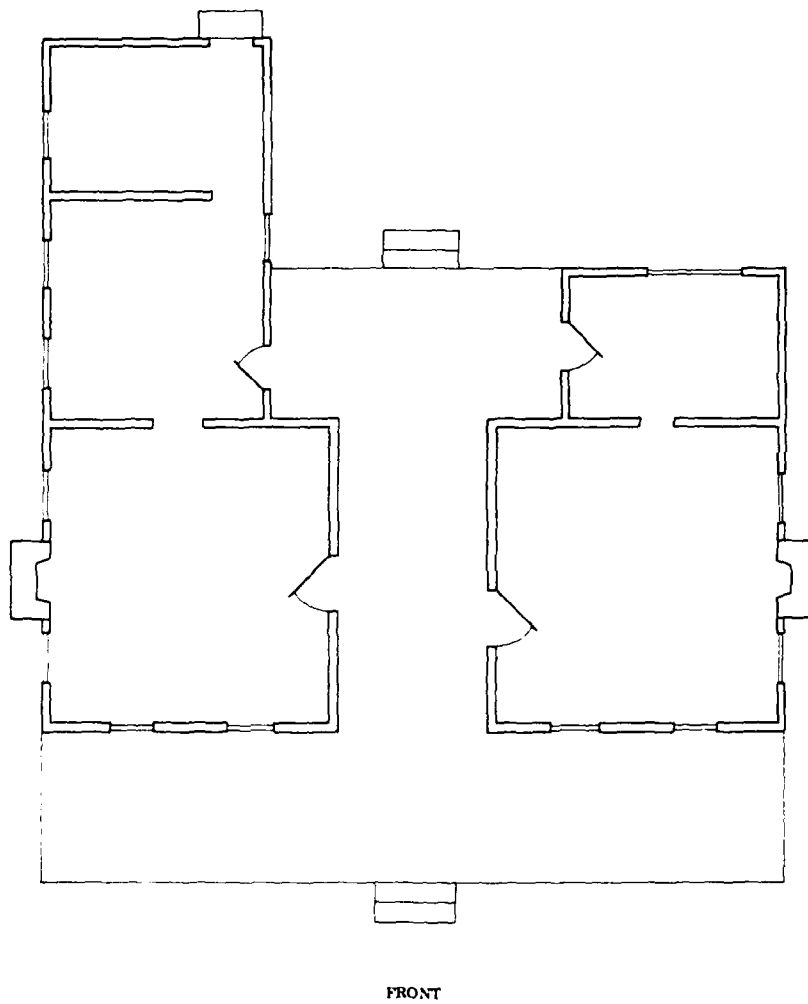
the street. According to Hudgins and White (1985:83), the T-shaped cottage does not have a pedimented gable and the front porch is smaller than those that occur on the Victorian cottage. Also, the porch is usually covered by a shed roof. The structures are typically sheathed in clapboards or board and batten (Hudgins and White 1985:83; Glass 1978).

This folk type has been identified as a third generation variation of the dogtrot house by Wilson in his study, *Alabama Folk Houses* (1975:30). The dogtrot house, a permutation of the hall and parlor house, is simply defined as a two room house with a central, open hall, joined under a single roof (Figure 26). This identification is based on Wilson's evolutionary scheme showing change over time within the four basic folk house types in Alabama: the single pen, the double pen, the dogtrot, and the saddlebag. He outlines four developmental stages: the pioneer phase, first generation (1800-1840), second generation (1840-1940), and third generation (1875-1920). In this typology, the first generation of Alabama's folk houses were single and double pen log buildings. A defining characteristic of this period was the high quality of workmanship these buildings displayed. Second generation houses are representative of the period in which log construction was replaced by frame construction. These houses are characterized by smaller room size, and a more narrow passage within the dogtrot house. Room shape in double houses became square and the calibre of the workmanship diminished in comparison with first generation houses. Third generation structures duplicated second generation houses in form but not in materials. Weather boarded wood frame sheathed rooms were used, which, in the double house, were square in shape. Further, the dogtrot's door moved to the center of the structure and some examples are found with open, but floored passageways (Glassie 1968:98). The open passage visible on rural dogtrots were closed in urban examples and the front door would be accented with glass panes on either sides. Finally, "a long addition onto one side that produced a 'T' plan was a variation of wide distribution" (Wilson 1975:30).

This description, as well as the photographic illustration given by Wilson, is clearly a T-shaped cottage as defined by Hudgins and White (1985). In the measured plans gathered for this project, each T-cottage has a central hall or passageway which terminates in a door to the outside, a main feature of the dogtrot house type (Figures 25 and 26). It should be noted that if Wilson's schema is on target, the Victorian cottage defined below may also be a variant of the third generation dogtrot. The typical house plan of the Victorian cottage shown in Hudgins and White's report could be interpreted as a T-shaped cottage with rear service additions rather than as a new type. It should also be noted that the periods of construction for the T-shaped cottage and the Victorian cottage overlap. Hudgins and White note that the T-shaped cottage corresponds chronologically with the Victorian cottage (1909 - 1918) in the survey area, although the T-shaped cottage was built into the mid-1920s. Thus, the difference between these types may be a matter of detailing as opposed to plan. Their survey shows that all of the T-shaped cottages (seven) found and ten out of the eleven Victorian cottages identified were situated within East Birmingham.



**FIGURE 26**  
**Example of a Dog Trot House Near Ralph, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama**  
(From Glassie 1968:95)



### *The Victorian Cottage*

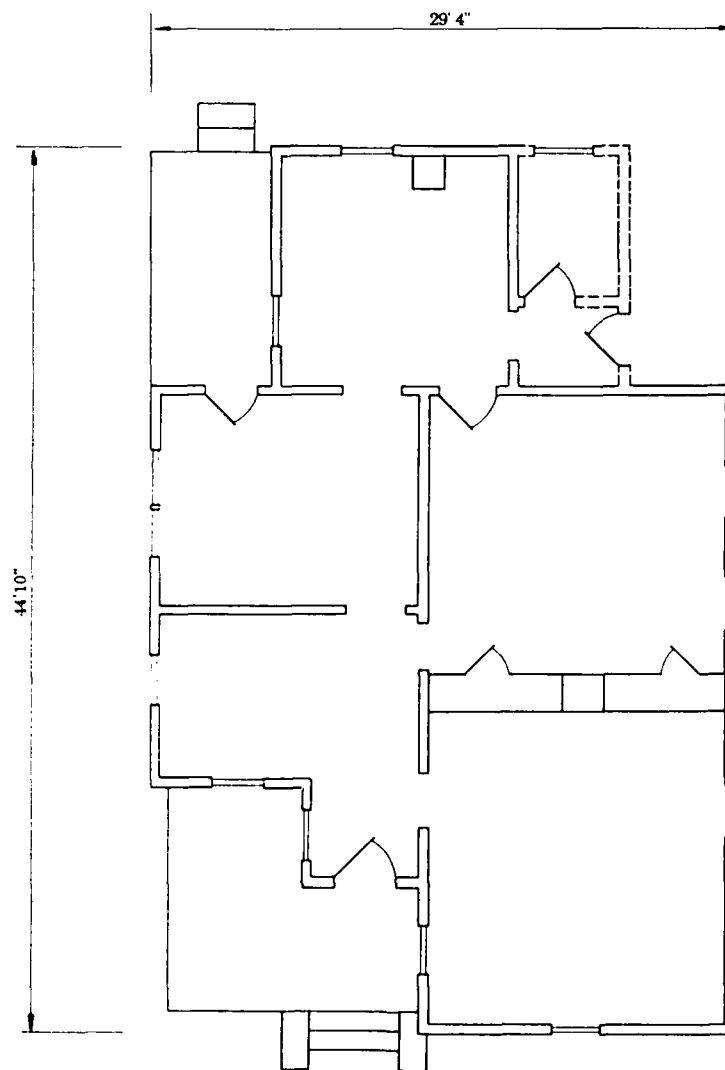
Hudgins and White (1985:83) describe this cottage as a one and a half story structure displaying asymmetrical massing (Figure 27). Both hipped and pyramidal roofs were in evidence within their sample. In the former case, the ridge of the roof is perpendicular to the projecting gable, which is fully pedimented. Facade details include classical notes such as porch columns or brackets, sidelights and transoms which accent the doorway, and large, sometimes wrap-around, porches can also be present. The floor plan is characterized as a three room T-plan or as five rooms arranged around a central hall. Chronologically, this type dates to 1909 to 1918 in the project area. Ten of the 11 Victorian cottages identified were situated in East Birmingham; the one Victorian cottage located in East Lake maybe a T-cottage with rear additions. As noted, this type appears to be closely associated with the T-shaped cottage within the survey area and may represent an upscale version of the simpler house type within this community, rather than a different type.

### *The Four Room Cottage*

This group embraces all four room cottages within the current sample, regardless of roof type. Thus, structures noted by Hudgins and White (1985) as two room deep double shotguns and pyramidal roof cottages are subsumed under this type. This difference in style identification results from a difference in method rather than a disagreement about types. Architectural style in this study was interpreted on the basis of house plans as opposed to exterior details, a luxury not afforded within the framework of a windshield survey. The four room cottage was called a "double two" by those who were familiar with them in the study area. Square in shape, it was divided into fourths, with a single chimney heating the front two rooms (Figure 28). Although these were used as duplexes, the front porch would be shared by the occupants. A more complete description is offered by Hudgins and White (1985:83):

Raised on brick piers, these dwellings were most often clad in clapboards or board and batten. Walker Evans' photographs of rows of cottages of this plan in the shadow of the iron furnaces at Ensley made this house type into one of the strongest symbols of industrial life in the South during the Depression. The Birmingham Chamber of Commerce estimated that 1,400 houses of this design were constructed in the Birmingham District in 1904. And in 1920, a Department of Labor survey of industrial housing noted that the four room, hipped-roof frame cottage was the 'typical house in the southern states.' Construction costs for such a house ranged between \$600 and \$1,200 nationwide, and rent was usually \$5 per month.

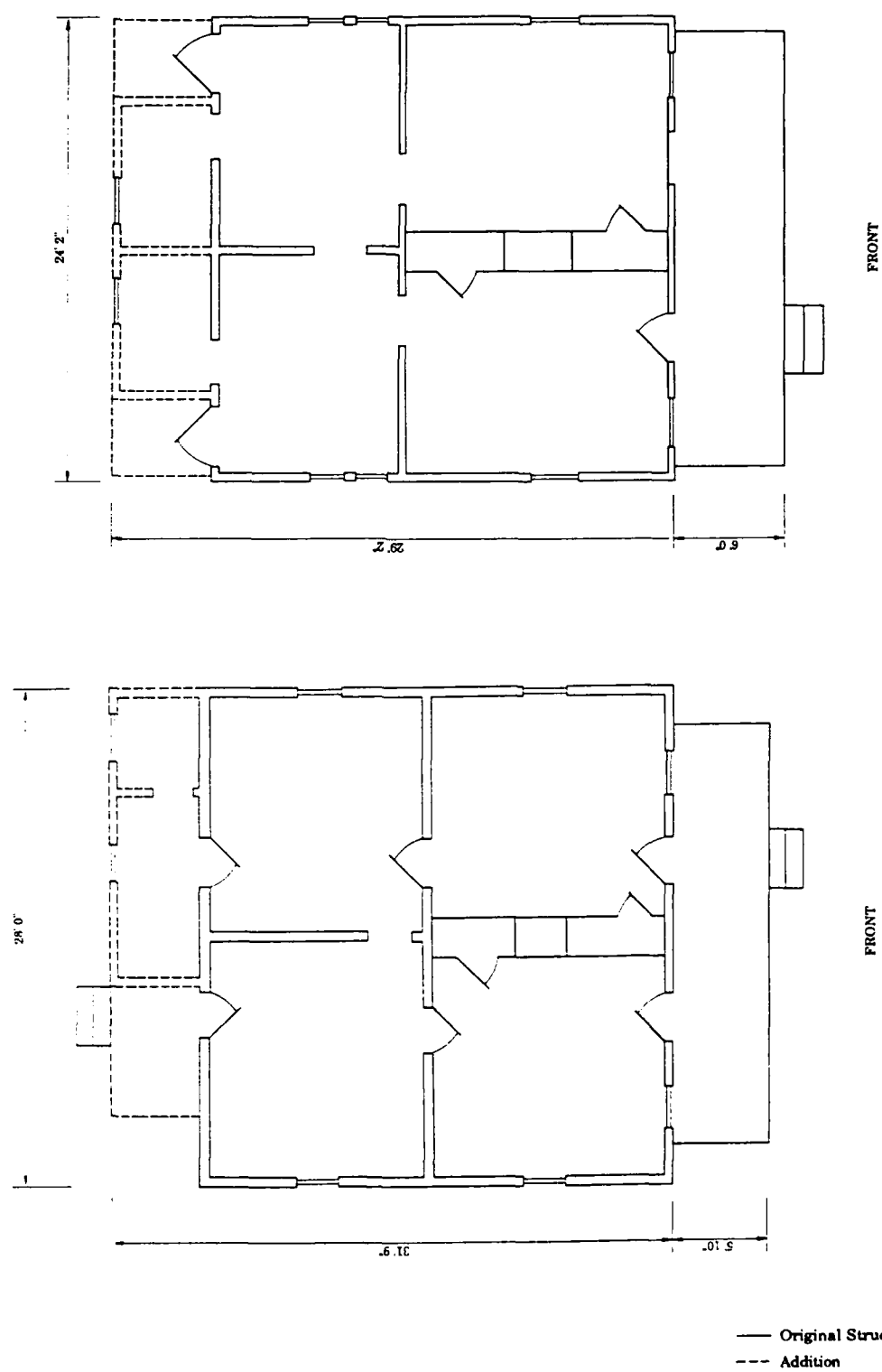
FIGURE 27  
Example of Victorian Cottage Plan



FRONT

— Original Structure  
--- Addition

**FIGURE 28**  
Examples of Four Room Cottage Plans



Hudgins and White noted the presence of only one four room cottage with a pyramidal roof in Ensley and three others in East Birmingham; the four were estimated to have been built between 1910 and 1940.

As noted above, many houses which were referred to as double shotguns in the previous study have been interpreted in this work to be four room cottages. This interpretation is based upon their uniform plan, which is a compact rectangular configuration, built out into four rooms. These houses are not narrow or elongated enough to include them as shotgun houses, even though outward appearance, mainly the front facing gable, associates them with the shotgun type. All of Hudgins and White's "double shotguns" included in the documentation sample were only two rooms deep per side; we would reserve the use of "double shotgun" for structures of at least three rooms in depth. There is some variation in room size and shape among our four room cottages; some possess four square rooms, others four rectangular rooms. However, the layout and organization of both subtypes is the same. This may suggest that those houses with unequally sized rectangular rooms were built by individuals familiar with shotgun house construction, and might represent a hybrid form of the two popular styles of workers' housing. Regardless of origin, these houses appear to be four room cottages in plan, and were used as duplexes. Our interpretation of type, as well as that of Hudgins and White, are included with each description of the houses.

### *The Bungalow*

A middle class housing type popular in the early twentieth century, the bungalow, is defined as a one and a half story structure with long sloping roofs, deep porches, and irregular room sizes. The use of wood and other natural materials in its construction and its low form imparts an image of harmony with the environment. Other key features include an asymmetrical facade, a blending of different building materials, heavy porch supports, the presence of gable dormers, exposed rafters, and wide projecting eaves (Klein and Fogle 1985:44-45). The interior of the bungalow was simply laid out with front doors which opened directly into living rooms, which in turn led into a dining room. One source notes the importance of the living-room fireplace in the winter, which may be constructed of brick or decorated with cobblestone, and the equal importance of the veranda or porch in the summer (Poppeliers et al. 1983:76-77).

This house type was noted as being second to the shotgun in its frequency along Village Creek during the first half of the twentieth century (Hudgins and White 1985:89). Twenty bungalows were encountered in East Lake, 51 in East Birmingham, and 43 in Ensley. The East Lake examples were dated to 1921-1950, the East Birmingham group stretched between 1909 and 1975, and the Ensley bungalows were constructed between 1921 and 1950. Only one bungalow was encountered within this study group.

### *The English Cottage*

This type was found within the larger survey sample but was not found within the current study group. Hudgins and White (1985:89) note asymmetrical massing, small porches, and arched entry ways constructed of brick or stucco over brick as features of this style of cottage, which was infused with British architectural details such as steeply pitched roofs, exposed timber work and ornamental stonework. In essence, the English cottage was a lower economic correlate of larger houses built for Birmingham's wealthier classes. This house type was found only in East Lake, and the dates of its construction ranged between 1921 and 1950.

### *The Saddlebag*

The saddlebag is defined by Glassie (1968:78) as a two room structure built first in log, and later frame, with two front doors and one central chimney. Hudgins and White (1985:89) state that despite its rural character, saddlebags were constructed and sheathed in clapboard in Birmingham between 1900 and 1920. They further note that ells are commonly attached to the rear, and observe the presence of partial front porches with shed roofs. Three saddlebags were identified within the project area; one in East Lake and two in East Birmingham. The construction date attached to the East Lake example is 1909-1920, while the East Birmingham examples were possibly built between 1909 and 1930. No examples of the saddlebag house were identified in our study group.

### *The Contractor Modern*

This appellation is used by Hudgins and White (1985:98) to describe a house type which was popular in the 1940s and 1950s in Birmingham as an inexpensive housing form. They describe it as box-like in configuration with uncovered stoops and covered carports or garages as salient characteristics. The materials used, namely concrete block, aluminum siding and windows, asbestos shingles, and pressed fiber siding, also help to identify this type, which was recorded in East Birmingham (28), East Lake (103), and Ensley (44). There were no houses of this type within the current sample.

### *The Ranch House*

Another post-World War II house type, the ranch house is typically a one story spread-out structure built in brick with a carport or garage. The rear patio common to this type replaces the front porch. Hudgins and White (1985) noted only 6 of this type during the survey, all located in East Lake. None were included within our study group.

### *The Multi-Family Unit*

This type refers to multi-family dwellings built typically out of cinder block during the 1950s and 1960s in the project area. Hudgins and White isolated this

group from other multi-family dwellings such as the double shotgun because of the distance in the dates of construction and by the difference in floor plan. They note that some of these dwellings house extended families within East Birmingham, where 51 of such units were identified. Dates of construction for these dwellings range from 1941 through 1975. No multi-family units were recorded in Ensley or East Lake.

### Residential Profiles

As Hudgins and White observe, the absence or presence of these types within the project areas offers information at two levels: first, they speak to the character of the communities and, secondly, to their age. Table 1 gives the frequencies of each type within the areas surveyed during 1985.

Table 1. Housing Types in the Village Creek Survey Area (Hudgins and White 1985:74).

Type	East Lake	East Birmingham	Ensley	Total
Shotgun Single	0	46	50	96
Shotgun Double	1	45	35	81
Pyramidal 4 room	0	3	1	4
T-shaped cottage	0	7	0	7
Victorian cottage	1	10	0	11
English cottage	16	0	0	16
Bungalow	20	51	43	114
Ranch	6	1	1	8
Contractor modern	133	28	45	206
Saddle bag	0	1	0	1
Multi family units	4	51	4	59
Totals	181	243	180	604

These frequencies clearly demonstrate that the project area within East Lake was the last to be developed of the three communities studied. The types found within East Lake are also decidedly different from those found in either East Birmingham and Ensley. The absence of the shotgun, the pyramidal four room cottage and the T-cottage speaks to a difference in community planning as well as a disparity in dates of construction.

The area along Village Creek within East Lake was remained in agricultural use until after World War II, and the area was not subdivided and built over until the end of the 1960s (Hudgins and White 1985:102). The house types reflect the era in which they were built as well as the image they were supposed to convey. Hence, the English cottage, a mimic of the larger more expensive homes being built in the more desirable parts of the city, was present within this middle class community. The small number of multi family units

also keys into the community character, which catered to middle class ownership of individual lots within a more pastoral setting.

The area along Village Creek in Ensley suffered little change as the twentieth century unfolded. While new contractor modern structures were built after World War II, the Ensley area retained a stable community image. In essence, families stayed in Ensley over generations with offspring taking up residence near their parents. This stability is reflected in the built landscape. Neighborhoods are well kept and the majority of houses are occupied (Hudgins and White 1985). This stability is still recognized by those who live outside the community. Mrs. Ann McCray Penick, who grew up in a house owned and built by her father in Ensley, was told by a friend, who grew up in project housing, that Mrs. Penick came from a well-to-do neighborhood. While Mrs. Penick felt this was not a correct representation of her childhood, she recognized that to others they must have looked rich, as her father owned and continually improved their corner lot. Mrs. Penick is an example of a second generation Ensley family who is raising her children in the neighborhood.

East Birmingham represents a different case. The great building boom within this community occurred between 1916 and the close of the 1920s. The neighborhood settlement pattern was determined by topography; lots away from the creek and situated on high ground were the first to be developed. Only after this development were the Village Creek lots considered as possible house lots. Hudgins and White (1985:102) point out that by the 1950s the neighborhood had declined, with skilled laborers no longer inhabiting the neighborhood houses. The multi-family unit was established to meet the needs of those who remained in the neighborhood, which over time would be carved up by road improvements, the establishment of the airport, and industrial expansion. The impact of these developments on East Birmingham was considerable; they rendered a once coherent neighborhood into pockets of streets vaguely connected to the original grid. The appearance of the neighborhood varies from street to street; some streets like Apalachee are lined with fully occupied houses, while other streets are derelict. The tranquility of the neighborhood is punctuated by the incredible noise generated by incoming and outgoing planes and jets, whose flight path to the Birmingham Metropolitan Airport takes them directly over East Birmingham.



## V. ARCHITECTURAL DOCUMENTATION

A total of 26 structures were recorded during the architectural documentation. These structures were chosen by the Corps of Engineers, most of which were recommended for further work by Hudgins and White (1985:15-116). They are not representative of all the house types which were identified by the 1985 survey. The five domestic architectural types studied within the framework of this project include: shotgun types, Victorian and T-shaped cottages, a bungalow, and four room cottages. Floor plan drawings were made of each of the buildings included in the documentation package. These plans and a brief biography of each structure are presented in this chapter. The information contained in the biographies is drawn from a number of sources: measured floor plans, photographs of the structures, lists of past residents obtained from the Birmingham city directories by 10 year intervals, land records, oral history, cartographic sources, and the 1985 survey report. In addition, tax data was collected from the Jefferson County Board of Equalization Appraisal Files on deposit at the Department of Archives, the Birmingham Public Library. These files contained the findings of a survey team who appraised each structure in the city; one survey was conducted in the late 1930s and a second appears to have been undertaken in the 1960s. In most cases, a plan, photograph, and verbal description of each structure was recorded. The files also yielded information about lot size, plumbing, heating, and house construction. The historic Appraisal Files were available for all but two structures: 1124 and 1126 Eleventh Street. Photographs were available for some of the structures and these were duly collected for inclusion in this report. When historical information posited an association between study structures or with adjacent structures not within the study group, information on the associated structures was also collected and is presented within the biographies.

The biographies are presented below by neighborhood, beginning with Ensley and then continuing northward to East Birmingham, and finally to the Victorian cottage situated in the Arden Park subdivision of East Lake. Each discussion commences with a description of the exterior of the structure, moves to the interior, and ends with the social-historical data.

### **Ensley**

Nine structures were recorded in Ensley. Five of these were located on Eleventh Street backing Village Creek, three on Twelfth Place, and one on Avenue V. All nine structures were used as dwellings for black workers and the majority were used as rental properties. Four of the dwellings were traditional shotgun houses, one a shotgun variant, and the remainder were four room cottages.

### *1334 Avenue V*

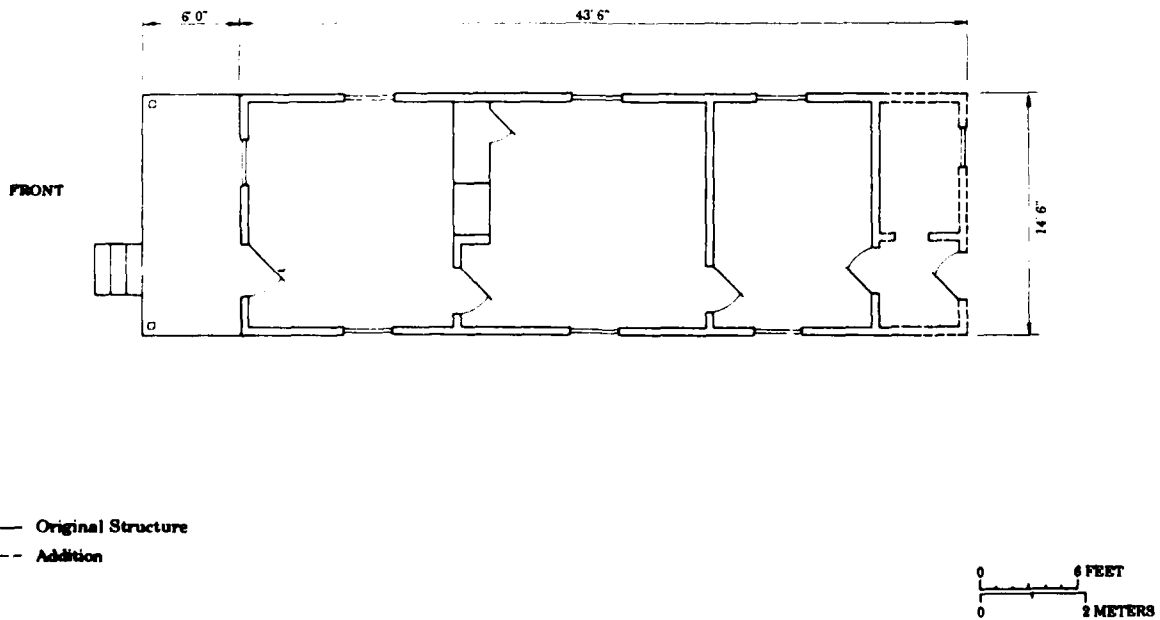
This structure is a three room frame shotgun dwelling built on piers with a rear shed addition (Figure 29). Finished in 5" cove siding, the exterior measures 14'6" across and 43'6" deep. Prior to the addition, the structure was 38' deep. The front facade features a projecting gable roof porch supported by wood columns. The porch balustrade is wooden, composed of two by fours in the pattern of an "x". A louvered attic vent also appears in the front gable. The front door is flanked by a rectangular, single window, having six over six lights and measuring 2'11" in width.

Interior room dimensions measure 13' 6" by 12' 6", 13' 6" by 14' 6", and 13' 6" by 9' 6" from front to rear respectively. A chimney, which heated the two front rooms, is centrally located on the interior wall in the middle room, with an adjacent closet. Double hung sash windows, having six over six lights and measuring 2'11" across, appear in each room on opposite walls. The only window deviating from this configuration appears in the addition on the rear wall. The addition includes a small entry hall and a bath. Finally, the rhythm of the doorway openings characteristic of the shotgun type is askew in this example. While the interior doorways are aligned, the two exterior doorways do not follow suit. Instead, they are similarly aligned in opposition to the interior doorways.

Historic information indicates that this structure was adjoined with at least two other structures on Lots 7, 8, 9, and 10 in Block 4 of the Tuxedo Park Subdivision. Tax data suggests that it and a companion shotgun were situated on Lots 7 and 8 proper in the late 1930s; the study structure occupies Lot 7. Each lot had a 25' frontage on Avenue V, running back 140' to an alley. Hudgins and White date the building to 1942, when it was first listed in the city directories. City tax records indicate an earlier date of construction, at least to the late 1930s when it was inventoried by the Board of Equalization. In 1939 it was a rental property earning \$10.00 monthly for its owner, Frances Gagliano. A 1939 photograph (Figure 30) indicates the appearance of the companion shotgun to 1334; no photograph was available for the study property. Heating was provided by two coal grates, one central and one in the rear of the building. Electricity and city water were listed as the sole improvements and a "dry toilet" four by five feet was located to the rear of the dwelling. The "dry toilet" is visible to the left of the house in the historic photograph. A half bath presumably located off the back porch was also noted. A later evaluation of the property in 1957 noted that plumbing had been added. Hence, the rear addition predates 1957. This same update indicates that a 28' by 38' structure had been added to the property to the rear of the shotguns. The surveyor noted that this structure had not been wired, which suggests that it had just been built.

The first occupant of the study structure was Moses Crosby a black helper, in 1944. From 1945 through 1950 Eugene Roberts and his wife, Katie B. lived at this address. Roberts was a laborer at TCI. A machine operator for the city's sanitation department, James Anderson and his wife Ella, were residing in the house in 1960. Bobby R. Bailey and his wife occupied the house in 1965, while Mrs.

FIGURE 29  
1334 Avenue V Photograph and Plan



**FIGURE 30**  
**1939 Photograph of Companion Structure to 1334 Avenue V**  
(Jefferson County Board of Equalization Appraisal Files.  
Courtesy, Birmingham Public Library, Department of Archives and Manuscripts)



Clara Stoniken resided there five years later. Mr. Bailey's occupation was listed as a molder for Stockhams's and Mrs. Stoniken was employed as a maid. The structure was abandoned at the time of recordation.

*1308/1310 and 1318 Twelfth Place*

These structures, constructed circa 1924 by a pair of brothers, share a common form and function. Both are frame four room cottages designed to be rented as duplexes. The exterior dimensions of the buildings indicate they are not equal in size. 1308/10 Twelfth Place measure 25'3" wide and 36'4" deep (Figure 31). The full projecting gable front porch adds another 6 feet to the depth of the building. The second structure measures 27'2" across and 33'9" deep (Figure 32). Again a full front porch adds 6 feet to the depth of the building. Hence, one is wider while the other is deeper. Both are covered with asphalt siding (brick pattern) applied over cove siding. Porch details consist simply of wood supports; each porch has a cement floor and cement steps. A rectangular louvered attic vent appears under the gable. 1308/10 has two front doors which are both flanked by a single window having four over four lights. 1318 has the same piercing but the door on the west side of the building has been replaced by a window. Both structures have a chimney which is shared by the front rooms of the duplexes.

The interiors of the two buildings were not accessible but were visually recorded. Both are abandoned and currently condemned by the City of Birmingham. Each had a living area one room wide and two rooms deep with opposing fireplace/closets in the front rooms. The wall dividing the rear room was opened at a later point in time to convert this structure to a single family dwelling in 1308/1310. As noted earlier, 1318 had also been converted into a single family dwelling. Small wooden porches appear on either side of the rear of the structures.

While Hudgins and White (1985:115) assign a date of 1940 to the buildings. Mrs Ann McCray Penick, the daughter of the builder, believes the structures were built circa 1924. Her father, Arthur James McCray, performed the carpentry work and her uncle, Barnett McCray, who resided on Avenue I, handled the plumbing and electrical work. A. J. McCray, a graduate from Hampton Institute in Virginia and formerly a teacher in rural Calhoun County, moved to Birmingham in the early twentieth century in search of a better job. His daughter noted that he was aware of two places of employment in the city: the steel mill or the mines. To his surprise he was hired by U. S. Steel at the Ensley Plant immediately upon applying, acquiring "a good paying job for a black man." He began working in the furnace area and by the end of his career with U.S. Steel 42 years later he was a crane operator. His daughter noted that her father walked each day to work "straight up Nineteenth Street," allowing one and a half hours each way to reach his destination. During labor disputes, her father was technically never out of work given his ethic of always making do and his gift for carpentry. Even the metal awnings on the family home were constructed by him.

FIGURE 31  
1308/1310 Twelfth Place Photograph and Plan

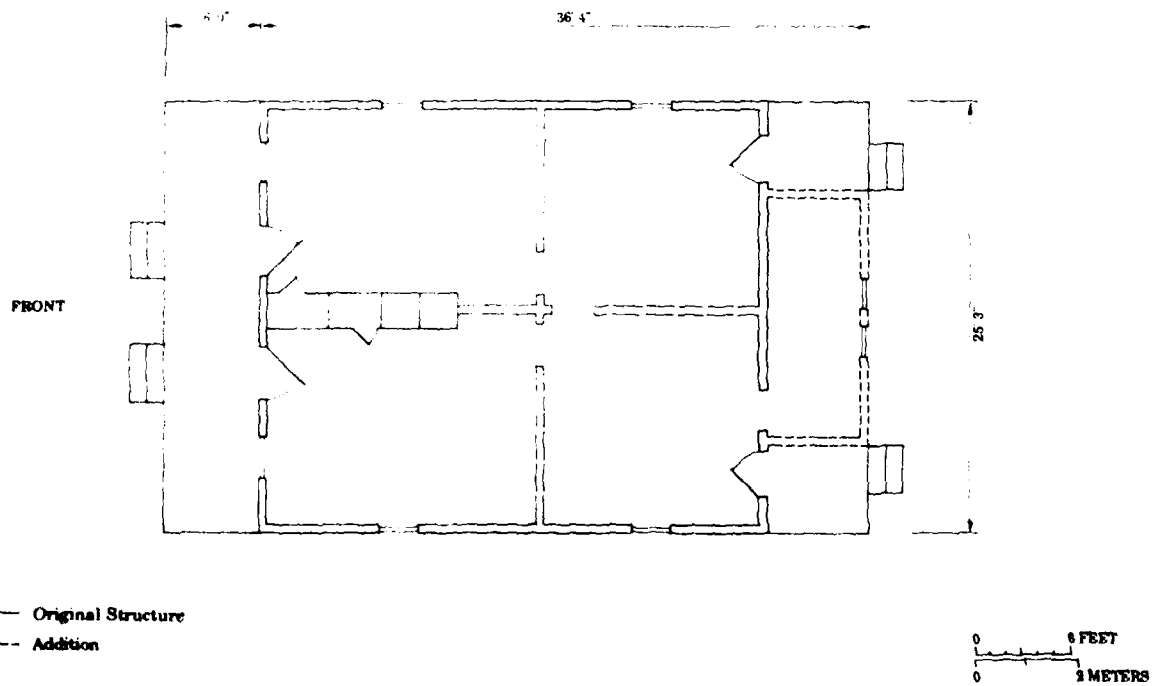
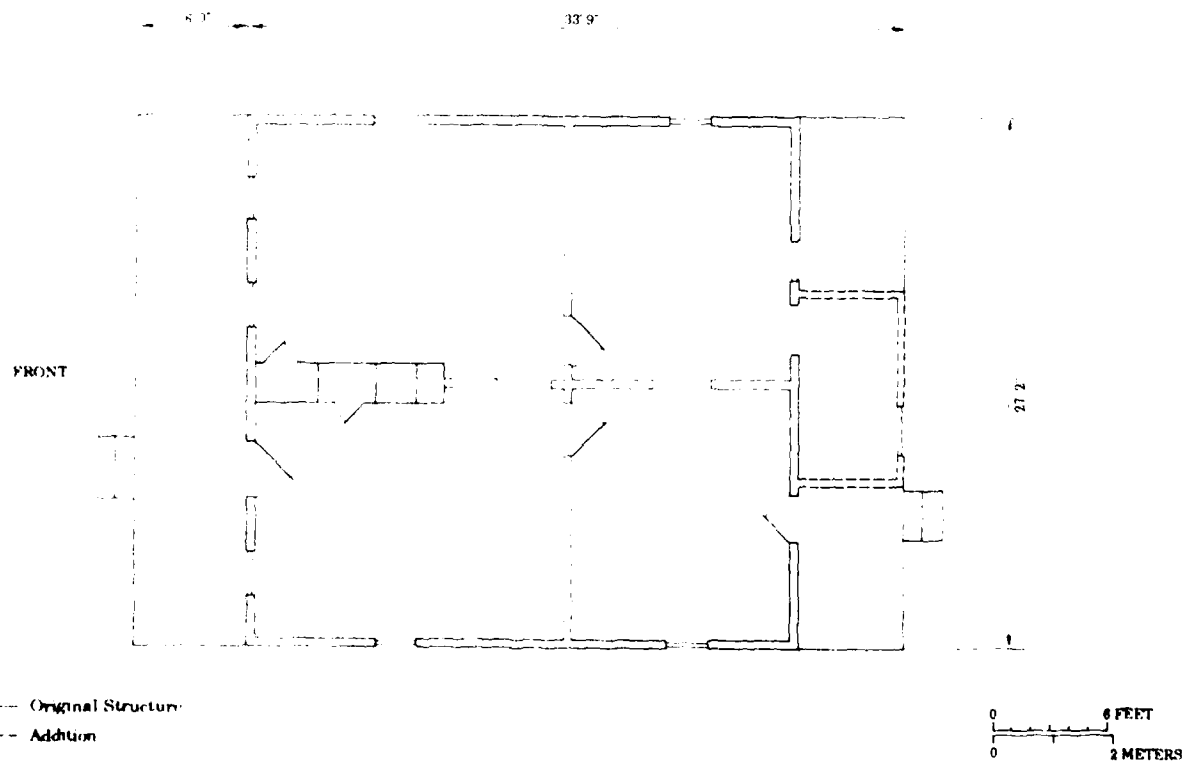
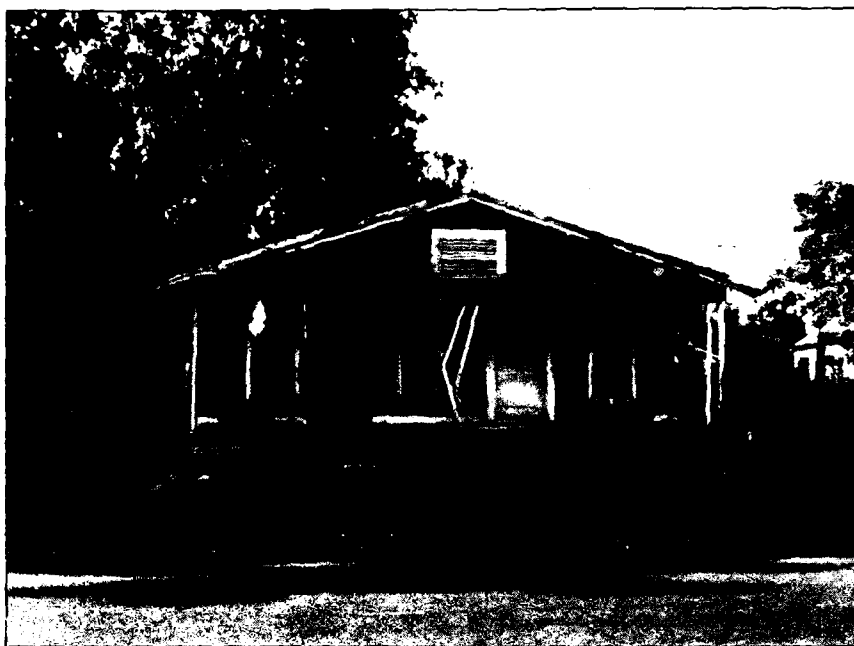


FIGURE 32  
1318 Twelfth Place Photograph and Plan



Mr. McCray purchased Lots 44, 45, and 46 in Block 5 of the Moro Subdivision, Ensley in the early 1920s for \$200; his monthly mortgage payment for the property was \$5.00. Lot 46 has a 20' frontage on Avenue N and runs back 121' along Twelfth Place while Lots 44 and 45 have 25' frontages on Avenue N. At the time of her father's purchase, only five or six houses were on the street and those housed steel workers and miners. On his land, which contained a corner lot, Mr. McCray built a six room bungalow with a partial front porch, a shotgun dwelling for his mother adjacent to the family house, and the study structures to be rented for additional income. Mrs. Penick was not aware of any plan or design that her father and uncle might have used to build the four structures. The family house, a six room structure with a bath, was just "home." The only change made by her father on the family house was the conversion of the back porch into a laundry room for her mother.

The back yard was an integral part of the house as it was used as a source of food and additional income for the family. Mrs. Penick described the yard as being devoted to the cultivation of vegetable and the raising of chicken and turkeys. A neighborhood plan of rotating crops allowed efficient use of space and labor, ie. her father would grow certain types of vegetables while the next door neighbor would grow others and the produce of both gardens would be open to both households. Like the backyard, the front porch and swing also had a role to play within the household. Within the boundaries of the front porch, Mrs. Penick's childhood and courtship was played out. This additional room allowed some independent movement for an adolescent and concomitantly some measure of control to the parent inside.

The shotgun, built to house A. J. McCray's mother, was described by Mrs. Penick as three rooms "straight on... you get to the front door and you've seen everything." After the death of Mr. McCray's mother, this building was also rented out. One of the renters of the shotgun was Mrs. Penick's mother, then a widow. In time, she married Mr. McCray, also a widower, and "moved into the big house," which later accommodated a family of nine. Mrs. Penick noted that the renters of both duplexes were usually long term. Moreover, one family, who rented 1308/10, rented the second unit to accommodate their expanding family as their children grew up. Significantly, another group of renters, a young family, asked Mr. McCray to convert one of his rentals into a single family house which he did to handle their spatial needs.

The study structures are described in 1939 by the Board of Equalization surveyors as five room frame duplexes having sewer hook up, electricity, two flues, and a bath. An "outside toilet" is also listed for the property. The 1939 photograph shows that both structures were built on piers, and that 1308/1310 had a slightly scalloped front porch trim (Figure 33). While 1308/10 received its first listing in 1931, no occupant's were noted. Mrs. Lina Finch, a widow who worked as a maid at the Ensley Community House, resided at 1310 Twelfth Place in 1950. Mrs Finch was still a resident in 1960. The directory of that year notes another tenant for 1310B: Abraham Bray and his wife Mattie. Mr. Bray worked as a



**FIGURE 33**

**1939 Photograph of: A - 1308/1310 Twelfth Place, and B - 1318 Twelfth Place**

(Jefferson County Board of Equalization Appraisal Files.

Courtesy, Birmingham Public Library, Department of Archives and Manuscripts)



**A. 1308/10 Twelfth Place**



**B. 1318 Twelfth Place**

laborer at TCI. The Finches and the Brays are the long term renters referred to above who used the duplex to accommodate an extended family living situation. By 1970, the structure had become a single home when Rita Chappell, a presser at Stewart Cleaners was the sole listing for the house.

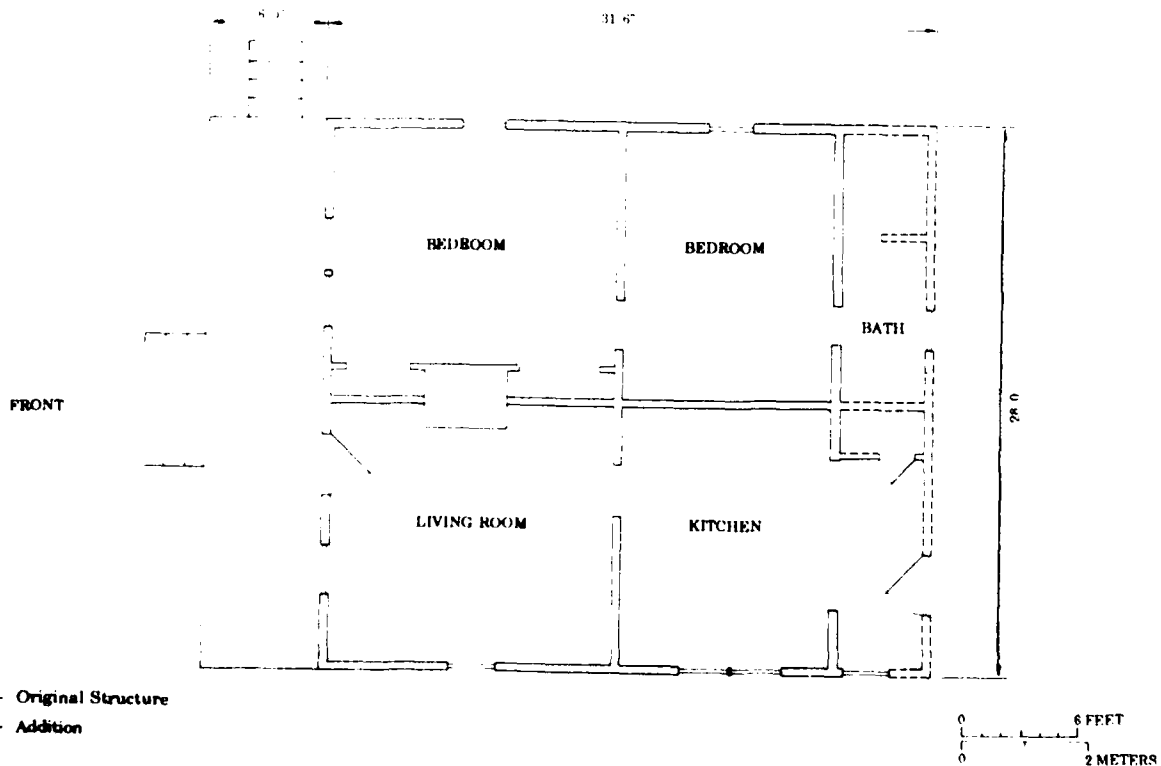
The second duplex, 1318 Twelfth Place, also listed as 1316/1318 Twelfth Place, was rented out in 1927 to Mollie Melone (1316) and to Tiney Collins, a black laborer (1318). A Mollie Holmes resided in 1316 Twelfth Place through 1939. The Hill-McCall family lived at this address from 1941 through 1961. James Hill, a laborer, first rented the apartment in 1941. Maggie Hill, a cook, is noted as the occupant the next year; from 1946, Maggie McCall, probably Maggie McCall nee Hill, is listed through 1961 as the resident. The apartment is no longer separately listed after 1968. The renters of the other half of the duplex included Eula Miller, who cooked as an occupation. Subsequent occupants, the Marshall family and the Edwards family, resided in 1318 between 1950 and 1970. The house was converted into a single family dwelling for May B. Edwards, the widow of Bowman Edwards.

### *1313 Twelfth Place*

This structure is an example of a four room cottage used as a duplex with a shed-roofed rear addition (Figure 34). The exterior, covered with new board and batten siding, measures 28' across and 31'6" deep. The original depth of the house minus the addition was 26'6". The full front porch adds another 6' to the depth of the structure. The facade features a projecting gable roof porch accessed by steps on the front and side of the porch. Wrought iron is the medium for the porch details which include columns, balustrade, and railings. A set of double windows and a single window flank the front door. Each of these double hung sash windows are 2'6" in width and have iron burglar bars. Porch furniture, hanging plants, and flowering shrubs complete the front of the house. Interior room dimensions measure 11' 11" by 14' 3" for the two front rooms and 10' 11" by 13' 3" for the two rear rooms. An enclosed fireplace is centrally located on the wall between the front rooms. The remaining windows in the structure vary in width between 2' and 2'6"; all are double hung sash windows. It appears that none of the windows are original to the building. The rear shed addition now houses a kitchen and bath, and the former locations of these rooms within the 4 room cottage is uncertain. Although the structure is currently solely occupied by the owner, the duplex floorplan has been retained, with an entrance on the front elevation for access to the duplex on the right-hand side, and a rear entrance for access to the left-hand side.

The building was first listed in the city directories in 1926 when it housed Jesse Willis, a black miner and Lillie Jackson, a black domestic. The earliest tax appraisal found for this structure dates to 1961, which indicates that the house is built on Lot 27, Block 3, of the Moro Park Subdivision (resurvey of Lots 26-33 in 1961). The lot measures 47.15' along Twelfth Place and 41' along Avenue S. At that time, the structure was listed as a four room duplex, occupied by tenants who paid a monthly rent of \$25 for each side of the structure. The house featured two

FIGURE 34  
1313 Twelfth Place Photograph and Plan



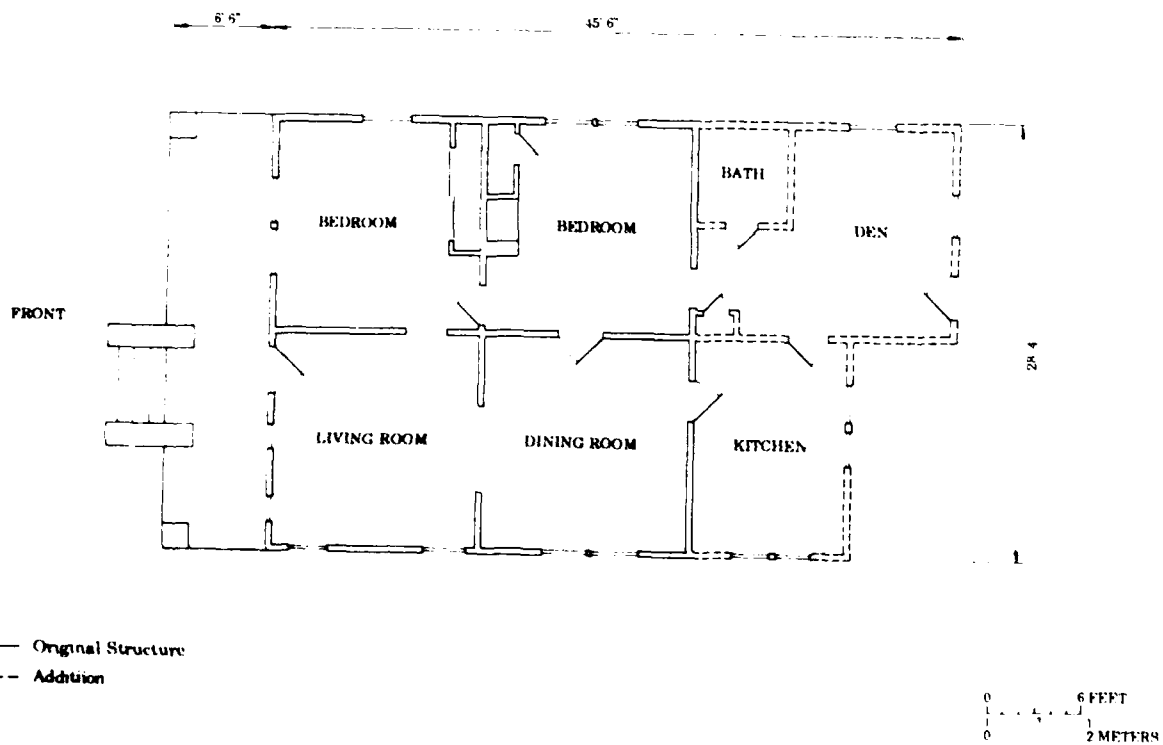
baths, listed as having "commodes only," coal heat, pine floors, and a composite shingle roof. A rear addition to the structure was completed in 1964. City directory information for the occupants of this structure is sporadic. There is no listing for this address in either the 1940 or 1960 city directory. The 1950 directory lists Mr. William Howard and his wife Lizzie as residents. Mr. Howard is listed as a black laborer employed by Bessemer Steel.

*1116 Eleventh Street (formerly 1102 Eleventh Street)*

This structure has been characterized as a bungalow by Hudgins and White (1985:115), probably due to its deep porch and low sloping gable roof, but its floorplan suggests a stronger affiliation to the four-room cottage. The house features a projecting gable roof over a front porch, with the porch and roofline supported by brick columns, and an ornamental brick retaining wall (Figure 35). Reportedly, the brick work is original to the structure. The exterior, finished with shiplap siding, measures 28'4" across and 45'6" deep. The front porch adds 6'6" to the depth of the house. A set of double windows and a large picture window complete the facade. Both windows are flanked with shutters having a diamond design. Concrete steps lead to the front porch from the sidewalk. Plants and shrubs in a raised bed cover the foundation. An L-shaped addition, spanning the entire back of the house, increased the original length of the house by 17'6". The front two rooms of the 4 room cottage measure 13' 3" square, while the two rear rooms measure 13' 3" by 13' 6". A central and side chimney are in evidence. The addition currently houses a bath and kitchen.

The structure is now occupied by the owner, Mr. Eddie Johnson, a retired steelworker, who owns Lots 1 and 2, Block 10, Moro Park Subdivision, upon which the house is sited. These lots are irregular in size, having a 25' frontage on Eleventh Street and 30' along the back line which skirts Village Creek. Lot 1 has a depth of 232', Lot 2 a depth of 220'. The 1939 tax appraisal lists three structures for the property which at that time encompassed Lots 1-4: the study structure, a six room cottage, and a garage. The study building, located on Lots 1 and 2, was described as a 5 room frame cottage with a rolled roof and pine floors; the plan shows that the right-hand rear room had been added to the structure as of that date. A closed porch completed the other corner of the rear, giving the back of the house a square shape, and a "water closet" was attached to the rear of the house. Improvements listed for the study structure in 1939 included electricity, three grates, and a septic tank. The other dwelling on the property, the six room cottage, was situated on Lots 3 and 4. This was probably a rental property, having only a "pit toilet" and two grates. The exterior of this structure measured 26' across and 36' deep. The City Directory information indicates that the study structure was occupied by John Smith, a black laborer in 1927. Three years later Moses Gresham, a black steel worker, and his wife May were listed at that address. In 1940 and 1950 the structure was noted as the residence of William George and his wife Patience. George was a black laborer at the TCI furnaces. Eddie Johnson is the current owner and resident of the structure.

FIGURE 35  
1116 Eleventh Street Photograph and Plan



*1124 Eleventh Street (formerly 1106 Eleventh Street)*

This structure is a traditional three room shotgun, one room wide and three rooms deep, with a later shed roof addition at the rear (Figure 36). The exterior is finished with aluminum siding applied over the original cove siding. The exterior measures 14'2" across and 46'1" deep; the house originally was 40'3" deep before the addition. The porch adds an additional 6'6" to the length of the house. The facade has a projecting gable roof porch and a metal awning further covers the porch, which is supported by iron pipes on brick piers. The remaining porch details are completed in brick. A single window flanks the front door and a louvered attic vent appears below the gable. The double hung sash windows range in width from 1'8" to 3'.

The original rooms of this structure measure 13'6" by 13'2", 15'5" by 13'2", and 9' 6" by 13' 2" from front to rear respectively. Windows are found on opposing walls, allowing cross ventilation, and a fireplace is located on the wall between the front and middle rooms. Like other shotguns within the sample, all of the doorways are not aligned; the exterior doorways are off center from those in the interior of the house. The rear addition includes a bath as well as an open shed roofed porch.

No early Board of Equalization records could be found for the dwelling located on Lot 5, Block 10 of the Moro Park Subdivision, having a 25' frontage on Eleventh Street. City directories indicate that it was first occupied in 1929 by Norman Spencer, a black miner. Another miner, Andrew Jackson, was listed for the house in 1930, but by 1940 Charles Bonner and his wife Elizabeth became resident owners. Charles Bonner worked first as a laborer for TCI before becoming a switchman. By 1970, he had become a switchman for US Steel. Mrs Elizabeth Bonner is the current owner and resident of the shotgun.

*1126 Eleventh Street (formerly 1100 Eleventh Street)*

This structure is a shotgun type dwelling with an L-shaped addition to the rear (Figure 37). Listed as a shotgun by Hudgins and White (1985:115), it varies from the standard shotgun plan, being originally two rooms deep and one room wide. A frame gable roof addition has been attached to the west side, and a later shed roof addition has been added to the rear. The exterior, finished with five inch cove siding, measures 24' across and 34'6" deep. The front porch adds 6'6" to the depth of the house. Without the rear additions, the depth of the house would be 28'3". The facade has a projecting gable roof covering the front porch, which is supported by wood columns on brick piers. A single window 3'4" in width flanks the front door. Louvered shutters occur on this window and on the double windows facing the street on the ell. The area from the street to the ell is used as a driveway. A metal settee appears on the front porch.

The front door leads into two rooms which share a chimney. The front door is not aligned with the interior doorway and entry to the addition is obtained

FIGURE 36  
1124 Eleventh Street Photograph and Plan

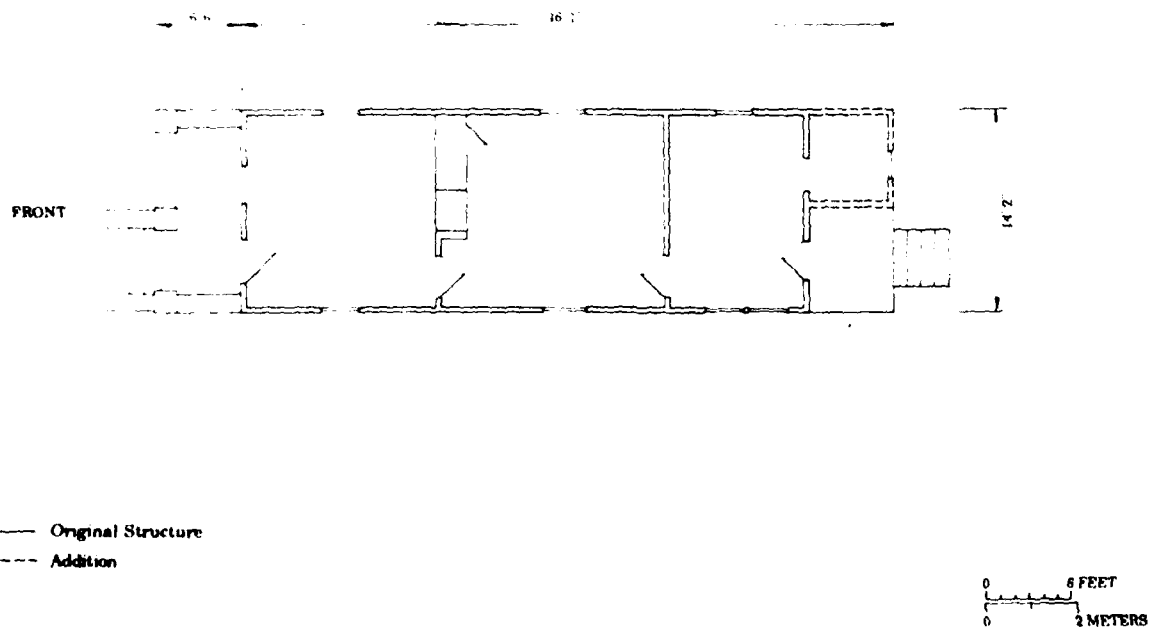
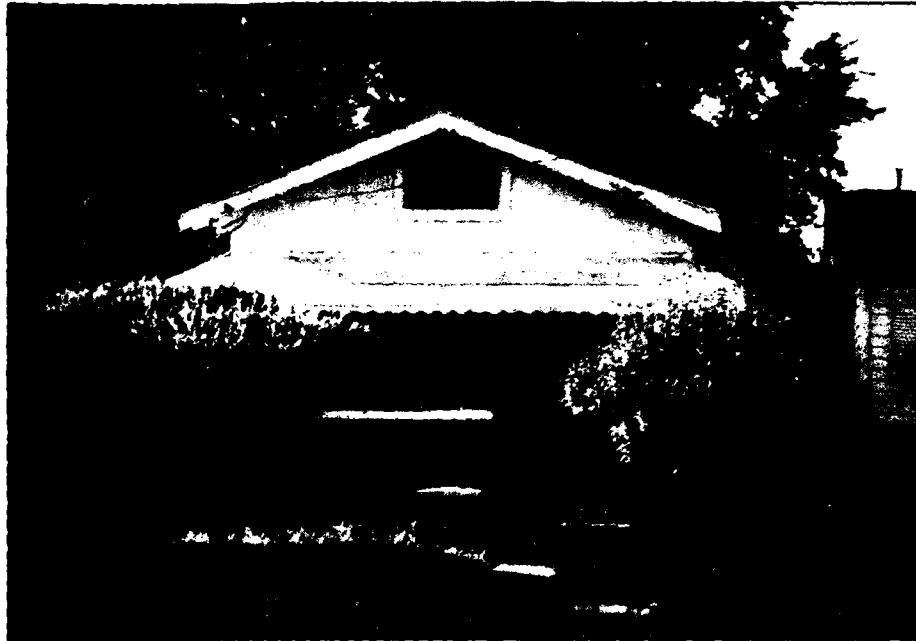
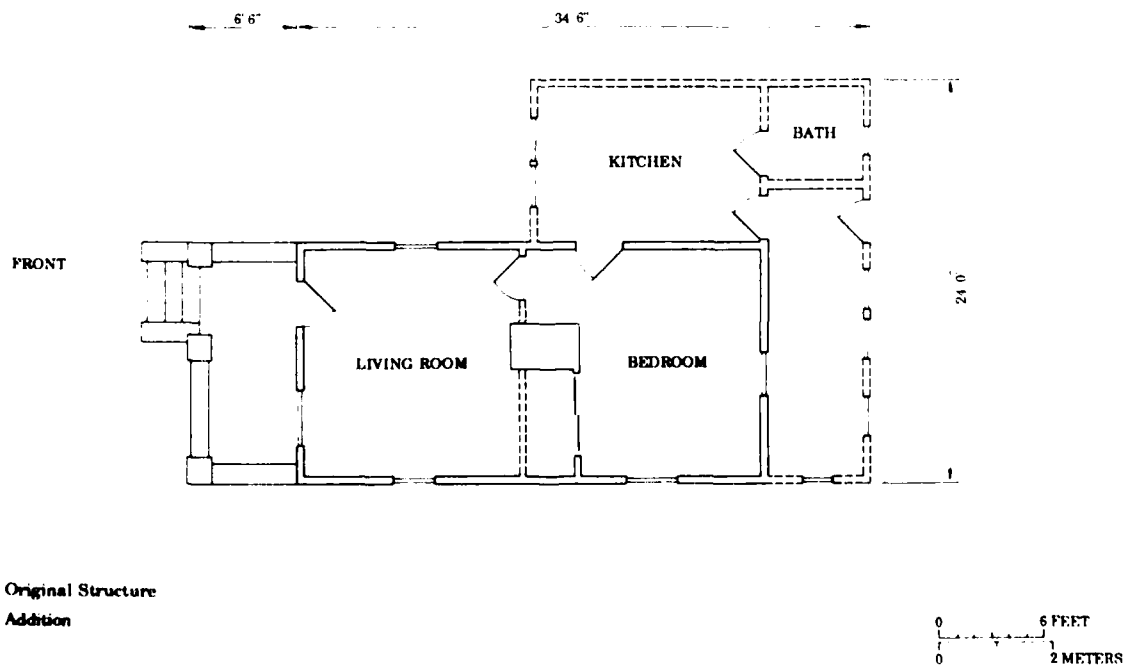


FIGURE 37  
1126 Eleventh Street Photograph and Plan





through the west wall of the second room. The dimensions of the original two rooms are 13'4" by 12'7" and 13'4" by 13'1". The addition included a bath, enclosed porch and a kitchen. As with 1124 Eleventh Street, no early Board of Equalization records were found for this structure. Interestingly, the 1928 city directory notes that Mary Bonner, a laundress, was living at this address in that year. This was probably a relative of Elizabeth Bonner, the current owner. Two years later Mary Bonner's husband, James, an ice cream maker, was listed with her. By 1940, the Bonners no longer lived there. Lloyd Brown and his wife Mary were listed at this address in 1950 and 1960. Brown was first listed as a laborer at TCI, then ten years later as a furnacekeeper at the same plant. The 1970 directory indicated that the Browns had moved; the house was occupied by Mrs. Mildred L. Chandler, a nurse at St. Vincent's Hospital. Ms. Elizabeth Bonner, the owner and resident of 1124 11th Street, is the current owner of this structure; her daughter and her daughter's husband are the current residents.

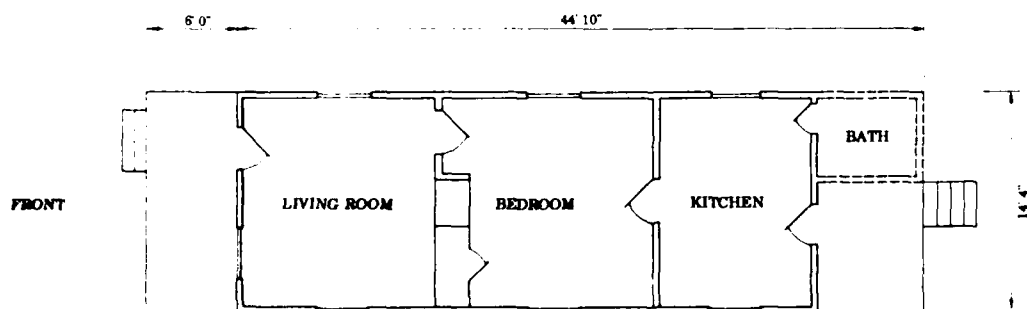
*1128 Eleventh Street (formerly 1110 Eleventh Street)*

This structure is a three room shotgun dwelling with small wooden shed room addition and porch attached to the rear (Figure 38). The exterior, finished in five inch cove siding, measures 14'4" across and 44'10" deep. The latter is increased six feet by the front porch, which has a projecting gable roof. Wrought iron supports, balustrade and railings compose the porch details for the concrete porch; the porch floor and front path are painted red. A single window (3'4" wide) and door complete the facade.

The rooms measure 13'4" by 12'7", 13'4" by 13'10", and 13'4" by 10' respectively from front to rear. Like the other shotguns, the doorways are not aligned and no pattern is discernible. Windows appear on opposing walls, and a fireplace is centrally located on the wall between the front and middle room. The back addition houses a bath, and an open shed roof porch accessed by concrete steps lines the remainder of the rear wall.

This structure was first listed in the city directories in 1928 when they cited William Phillips, a black laborer, as a resident. Effie Sweeney, a maid, was the occupant in 1930. In the late thirties, Annie Mae Crenshaw purchased the house located on Lot 7, Block 10 of the Moro Park Subdivision. Again this lot had an irregular configuration, having a 25' frontage on Eleventh Street and a 30' back line skirting the creek. The lot at its longest was 145'. The 1939 tax appraisal lists this structure as a 3 room cottage, and notes that the property also contained two sheds at that time (Figure 39B). Electricity was the only improvements listed in 1939. The structure featured an outside toilet, a single grate, pine floors, and a rolled roof. By 1950, the house was occupied by Cleveland Robertson and his wife Annie; the John Daniels family inhabited the house from 1960 through the 1980s. Daniels was a laborer at TCI, by 1970 he was retired. The Daniels were the last occupants of the house, which is now vacant.

FIGURE 38  
1128 Eleventh Street Photograph and Plan



— Original Structure  
--- Addition

0 6 FEET  
0 2 METERS

**FIGURE 39**  
**1939 Photographs of: A - 1130 Eleventh Street, and B - 1128 Eleventh Street**  
(Jefferson County Board of Equalization Appraisal Files. Courtesy,  
Birmingham Public Library, Department of Archives and Manuscripts)



**A. 1130 Eleventh Street**



**B. 1120 Eleventh Street**

### *1130 Eleventh Street (formerly 1112 Eleventh Street)*

This structure is a three room shotgun dwelling with a rear shed addition (Figure 40). It is almost a duplicate of 1128 Eleventh Street, bearing the same facade details. The exterior dimensions indicate that this structure is 1'10" shorter than 1128 Eleventh Street but shares the same width and porch measurement. The rooms measure 13'3" across and 12'7", 13'10" and 10' deep from front to back respectively. Windows are also located on opposite walls, and the location of the fireplace and interior doorways are replicated from 1128 Eleventh Street. The only difference is the positioning of the porch and bath addition on the rear wall, which is mirrored. Both houses have a hedge growing along the front sidewalk.

The structure is located on Lot 8, Block 10 of the Moro Park subdivision; an irregular shaped lot having a 25' frontage on Eleventh Street and running 130' back to the creek. The house was first listed in 1930 as vacant but two years later Lawrence Ashe, a black laborer, was reported as the resident. According to the 1939 tax appraisal, this structure was a three room cottage with three associated outbuildings, including two sheds and a outhouse (Figure 39A). Improvements listed for this structure include electricity. Lavatory facilities were provided by a pit toilet, while heat was provided by two grates. The structure was rented by its owner, Cornelia Morgan, in 1939, for a monthly rental of \$10. Robert Wren, a miner for TCI, and his wife Hannah were listed as the occupants in 1940. According to the tax appraisal, the outbuildings were razed in 1964 and the shed addition was built at this time. The City Directory information lists Ms. Ethel Jordan, the widow of Taylor Jordan, as the resident in 1960. The structure is currently vacant; the last resident was Ms. Ethel Mae Jordan.

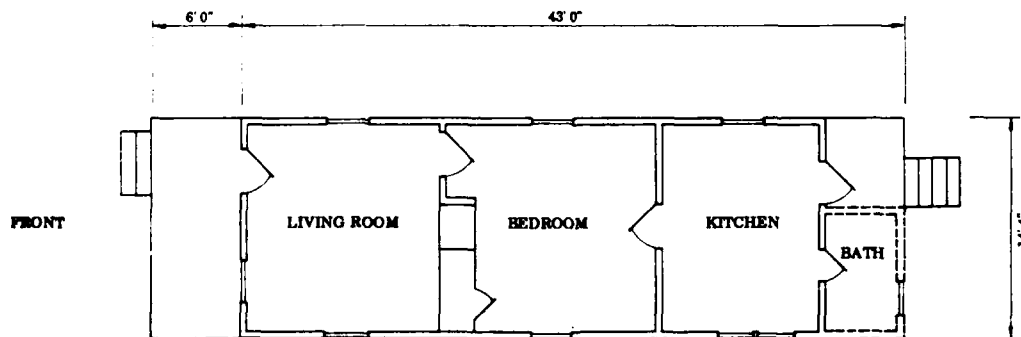
### **East Birmingham**

Sixteen structures were recorded in East Birmingham. Fourteen of the sample functioned as dwellings; all of these housed working class black families. A commercial structure and an urban example of ecclesiastical vernacular architecture which both date to the late 1920s complete the East Birmingham group. The architectural styles within the houses recorded include: five four room cottages, five shotgun houses, three T-cottages, and one bungalow. The structures are located on Cahaba Street (1), Sipsey Street (2), Coosa Street (1), Apalachee Street (4), Tombigbee Street (3), North Warrior Street (1), Thirteenth Avenue North (1), Fourteenth Avenue North (1), and Sixteenth Avenue North (2).

### *1227 Cahaba Street*

This structure is a traditional T-shaped cottage with wood framed additions on the rear (Figure 41). The exterior of the house measures 37'4" by 42' deep. The exterior finish is a clapboard vinyl siding over an undetermined wood siding. A concrete porch, measuring 21'10" in length and 6'10" in depth with a shed roof

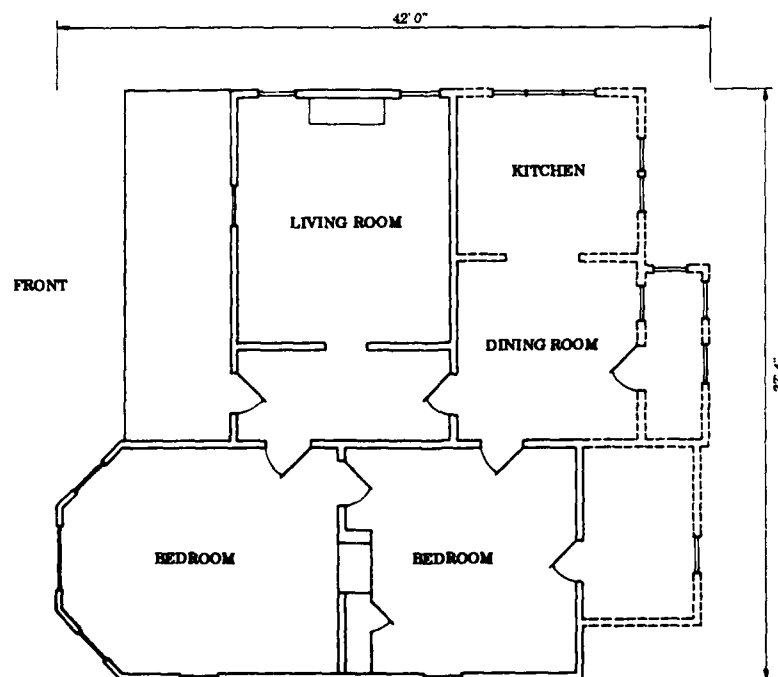
FIGURE 40  
1130 Eleventh Street Photograph and Plan



— Original Structure  
--- Addition

0 6 FEET  
0 2 METERS

FIGURE 41  
1227 Cahaba Street Photograph and Plan



— Original Structure  
--- Addition

0 6 FEET  
0 2 METERS

and striped metal awning, lines the facade. Wrought iron columns support the porch. Awnings adorn the windows in the front bay as well as the side windows. Two chimneys are positioned on the central gable of the seamed metal roof; the chimneys are stuccoed. The building, located on the west end of Lot 15, Block 51 in the Lincoln City subdivision, is fenced with chain link and large shrubs placed along the facade offer privacy for the front porch and bay windows.

The layout shows that the front door opens into a central hall. A large room, used as a living room (15'4" by 13'6"), with a fireplace is located to the left. Two rooms used as bedrooms are entered through the hallway to the right. These rooms share a chimney. The front room with the bay measures 17'3" in length and 13'9" in width; the back room, which has a closet adjacent to the fireplace, measures 13'3" in length and 13'9" deep. Four rooms have been added on to the rear of the structure; three to the rear of the living room, including a kitchen, dining room, and laundry, and a fourth, a bath, placed at the rear of the back bedroom. Measuring 11' square, the dining room is also entered off the central hall, while the kitchen is entered through a large (4'6") opening from the dining room. The kitchen measures 9'8" in width and 11' in depth; windows line the back and side walls of the kitchen. An oblong shaped laundry room is attached to the rear of the dining room; the laundry has a rear entryway and two windows. The bath can only be accessed through the back bedroom. The front and back doorways in the original portion of the structure are aligned, both measuring 2'6" in width. The doorways in the rear additions follow suit, however, they are not aligned with the original doorways just discussed. Other interior doorways are uniformly 2'8" in width within the original part of the house. Windows are double hung sash and hinged, and occur singly and in pairs, and, in the kitchen, in a tripartite conformation.

This address was first listed in the city directories in 1915, when Florence Lee, a teacher, resided there. Cahaba Street was known as Forty-Sixth Street until 1922, when Forty-Sixth Street above Tenth Avenue was renamed Cahaba Street. From 1916 through 1920, two men were listed as residents: Boss Morgan, a molder, and Judge Johnson, a laborer. The T-shaped cottage appears on the 1917 Sanborn map on the corner lot of Cahaba Street and Thirteenth Avenue North (see Figure 13). The Sanborn map shows that a partial porch predated the rear addition. At that date, the T-cottage shared the lot with a structure on the back of the lot which fronted on Thirteenth Avenue North. With the exception of two lots on the block, all the other lots had been improved with dwellings at this date. The only departure from this residential development was a structure located on the southern end of the block (4610 Twelfth Avenue North), which housed a store on the first floor and a school for black children on the second floor.

The 1929-1949 Sanborn map indicates that the lot was divided during this period. Three shotgun houses were constructed along the avenue on the newly created lot (see Figure 16). In 1929, the T-cottage was occupied by Jesse Barnett, a black laborer. Lorena and James Thomas, a machine operator, were living there in 1930, but in 1938 Will Jones was identified as the tenant. Conformation of the lot had changed once again according to the tax appraisal of 1938 which noted that

the study structure had been joined by a six room bungalow. No photograph of either of the building has survived within the Board of Equalization files and the surveyor of this building was brief in his description of the study structure, noting the following improvements: sidewalks, curb, gutter, sewer, electricity, city water, two grates and one flue, and one bath with a pine floor. Pine floors and plaster walls characterized the interior. The plan indicates that the rear additions were built later than 1938. Mr. Jones and his wife Eula L. Jones remained in the house through the 1960s. The current resident is Edie Mae Armstrong.

*1314 Sipsey Street (1312 Sipsey Street)*

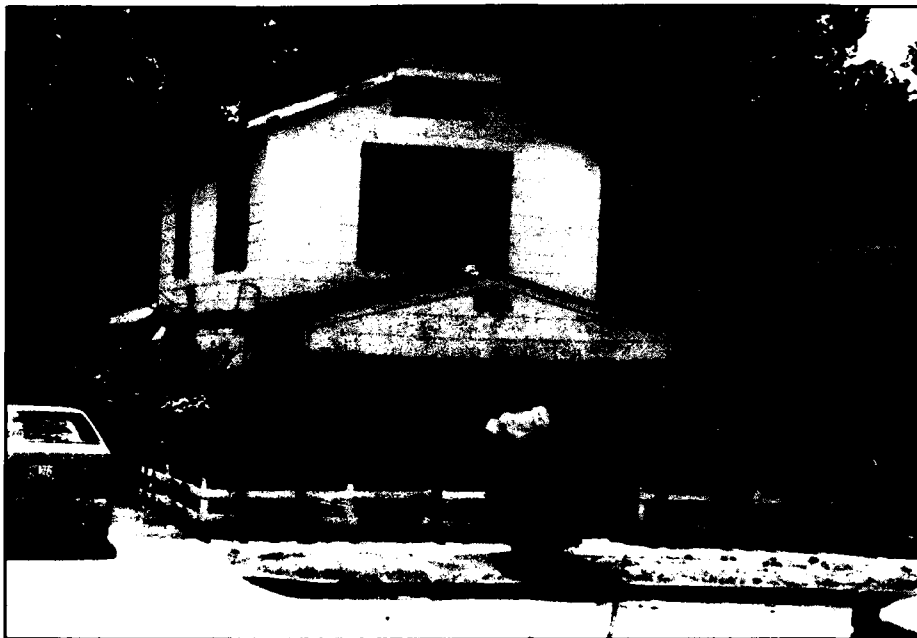
Possibly a shotgun variant, this structure is a two story frame house originally one room wide and two rooms deep with a small shed addition along the rear (Figures 42 and 43). The front gable is clipped. The exterior is 16'5" wide and 55'9" deep. This is the only two story house within the study group. A single story, two room addition has been attached to the rear in the 1960s. The second story extends over the front two rooms only, a stairway located on the southeast interior wall gives access to the second floor. Both the front porch roof and the main roof of the structure are gabled. An open front porch with a concrete base extends across the facade. The porch is supported by wrought iron columns; a wrought iron balustrade completes the porch details. Double windows and a double rectangular attic vent with brackets occupy the second story facade. Double windows occur throughout the original structure: in the living room, first floor bedroom and the second floor front room. The house's exterior is covered with asbestos shingles. The front and side yard is filled with flower beds and shrubs and the front porch is laden with hanging and potted plants. A painted wooden fence bounds the house.

The front door opens into a 13'8" by 15'4" living room which contains the staircase and a closet along the southwest wall. The back room, which is currently used as a bedroom, has double windows on opposite walls allowing cross ventilation and a fireplace which has been covered over. Moving upstairs, the second floor houses two bedrooms. The back room also contains a fireplace (covered over) and closet; the location of the windows duplicate those downstairs but they are single windows rather than double. The front room has double windows on each exterior wall as does the staircase, which occupies the southwest wall of the front room.

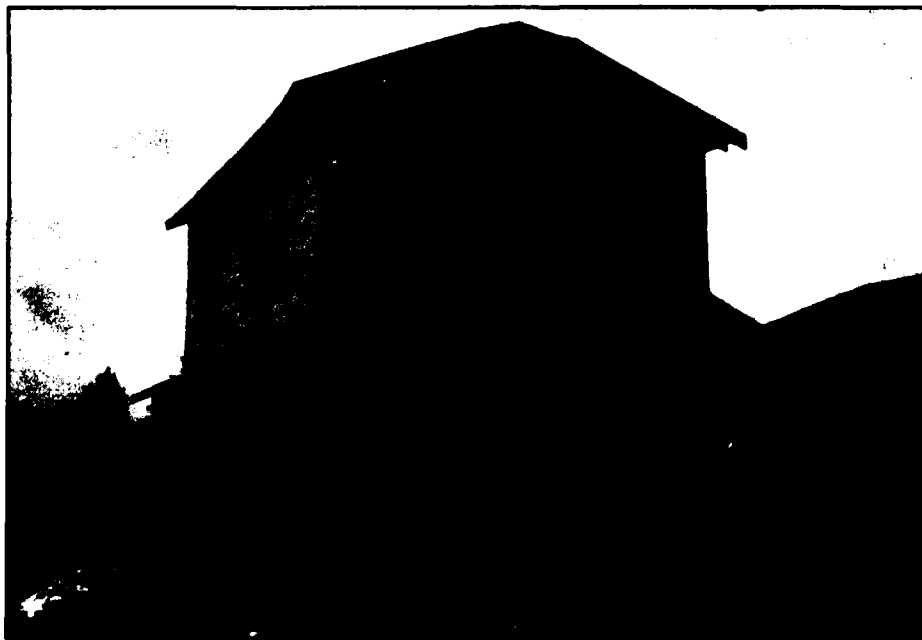
The rear frame addition which has a gable roof consists of a kitchen, bath, bedroom, and a small hall with a door. The kitchen and bedroom are separated by a small hall/entryway and the bath. The addition added over 28 feet to the length of the structure, while the width of the addition equals the width of the original dwelling (15'4"). Double windows are found only in the kitchen, the remaining windows in the addition are single. All of the windows are double hung sash windows. The service area can be accessed either through the house or by this outside door. As the back room of the addition is a bedroom, this plan appears to



**FIGURE 42**  
**1314 Sipsey Street. A - Current Photograph, B - 1942 Photograph**  
(B - Jefferson County Board of Equalization Appraisal Files. Courtesy,  
Birmingham Public Library, Department of Archives and Manuscripts)

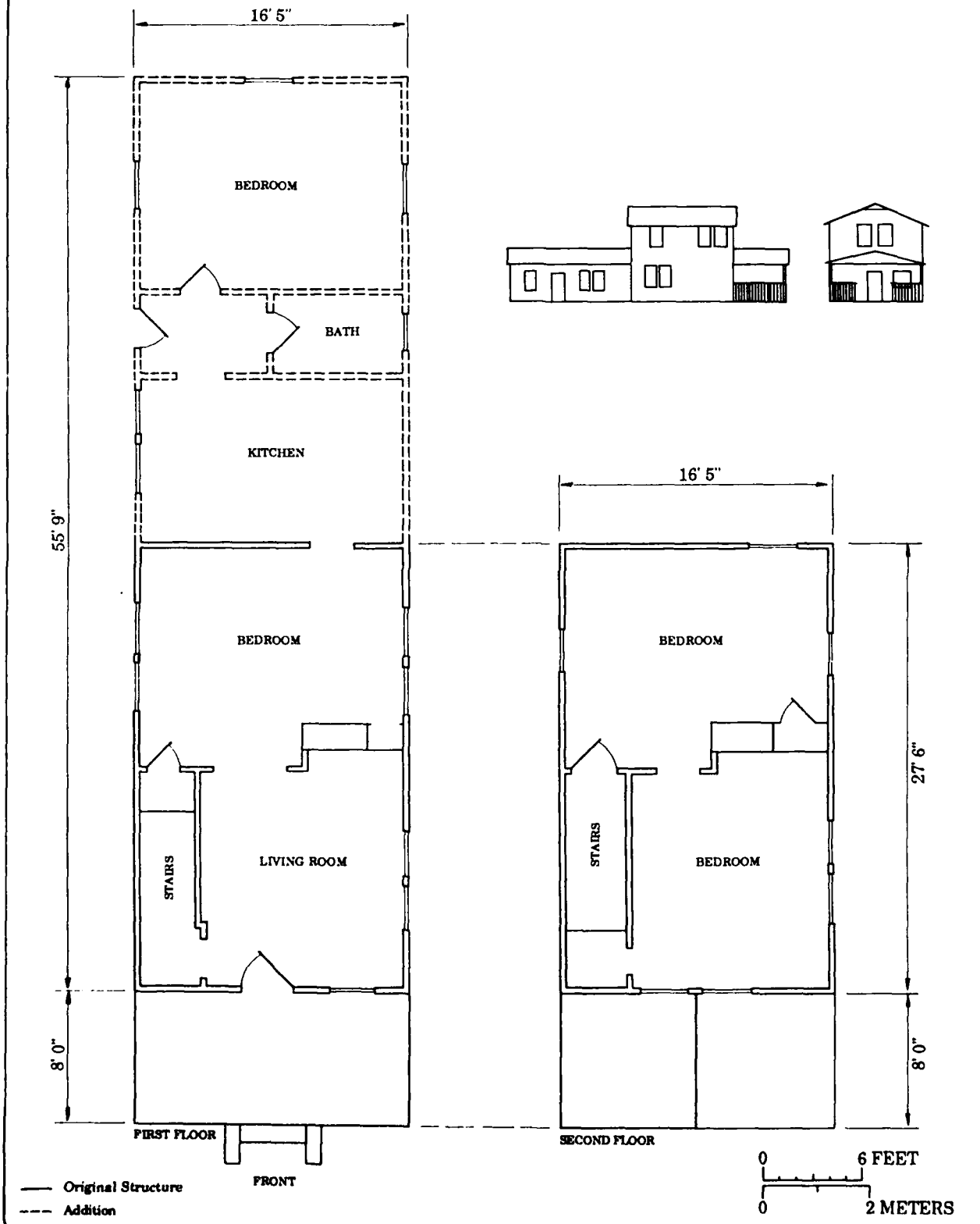


A.



B.

FIGURE 43  
1314 Sipsey Street Floorplan and Elevation Sketch



be designed to allow privacy and independence from the rest of the house and its occupants for the resident of the back room.

The dwelling is located on Lot 6, Block 65 of the Lincoln City Subdivision. This lot, which is 44' by 104', houses two structures; the two story structure under study and a double shotgun as classified by Hudgins and White (1985:115). The addresses for the homes are 1314 Sipsey and 1314A Sipsey. The double shotgun is known as 1314A Sipsey Street. The Board of Equalization Records contain a photograph of the two dwellings in 1942 which supports the Hudgins and White date of 1941 for 1314 Sipsey, the study structure, but indicate an earlier date for the other structure on the lot. Figure 42B presents the 1938 photograph of the structure. Comparison of this photograph with the current photograph shows that the position of the front door and window has been reversed, placing the front door in the center of the facade corresponding to the traditional shotgun facade piercing. The porch and the two room, rear addition have been added since the photograph was taken.

Harry Hall occupied and owned the study structure in the early 1940s. The photograph shows that he used his home as a place of business, selling scrap lumber from his yard. Hall reportedly was a well-to-do black real estate owner in the neighborhood who owned several other homes on Sipsey Street (Georgia Scott and Ocie Cherry, personal communication 1989). The city directories identify Harry Hall as one of the City of Birmingham's three black contractors in 1942. In 1941 he was listed as a peddler, and by 1943 he was no longer listed at all. Mrs. Scott noted that Hall held onto his properties along Sipsey Street until an elementary school's construction (Alberta Shields Elementary School) on the block in 1948 forced contiguous and neighboring property owners into installing indoor plumbing to comply with sanitation standards. As his houses were not plumbed, Hall quickly sold his properties to his unknowing renters and others, avoiding any personal financial repercussions. The Long family had purchased the house from Harry Hall in the late 1940s, in answer to a newspaper advertisement.

Wes Long had previously worked for Franklin Coal Mining Company and he and his wife Lilia and their family had lived in a mining camp house. Wes Long was a blacksmith for the company; one part of his job was keeping the coal cars in good order for the firm. Georgia Scott, his daughter, born on January 1, 1907 in Geiger, Alabama, remembers living in a six-room "double tenant house" in the camp, which essentially was a three room double shotgun. It had no insulation and no indoor plumbing. The Longs, a family of seven, moved to East Birmingham after their father's retirement. When asked to compare their present house to what they had lived in formerly, Mrs Scott recalled their impressions when they moved to Sipsey Street:

We thought we were in heaven... we love this house... you know when you lived in a mining camp so long and when you get something that's better, you love it. And we had never had a house with stairs. When we moved up here we had to buy a gas stove... we

had never had a gas stove before... we just liked it cause it was more than what we had before in the mining camp.

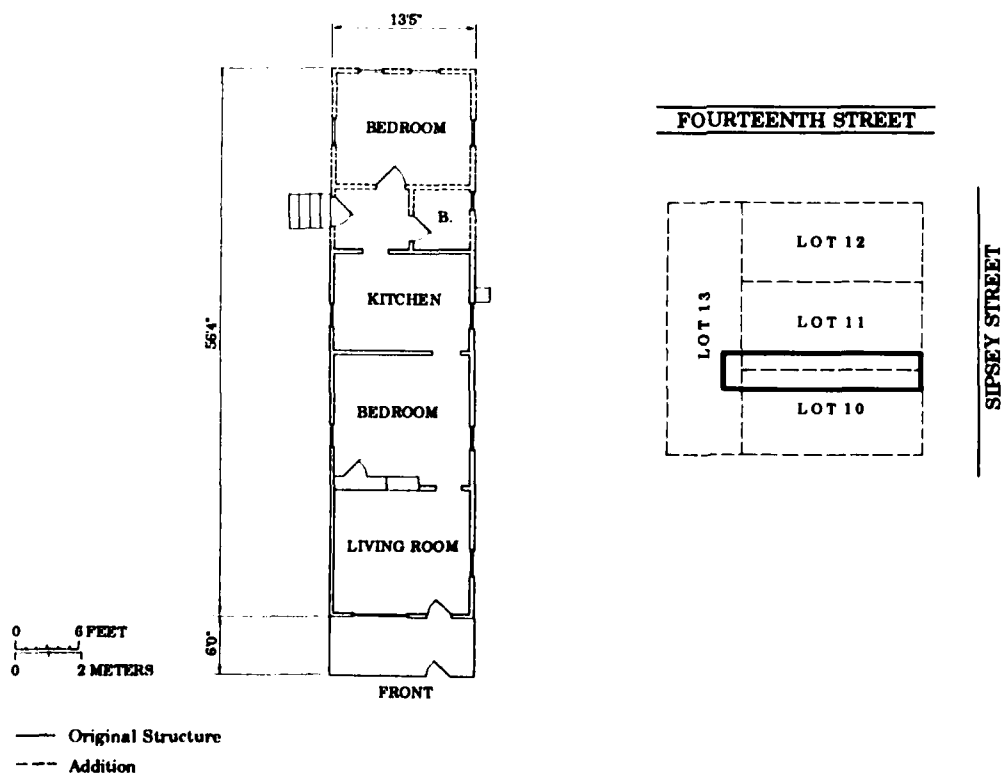
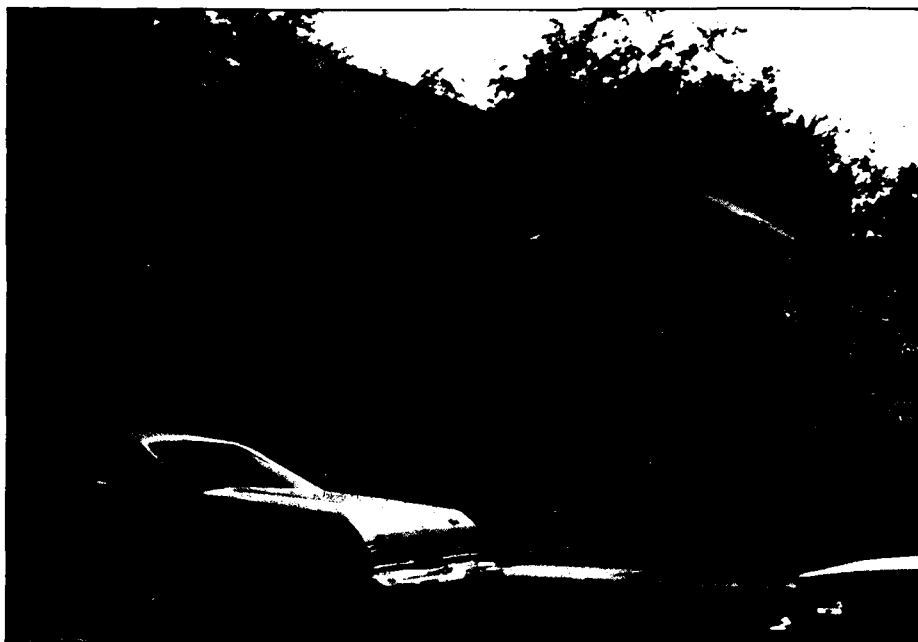
The house is also home to Mrs. Ocie Cherry, Mrs. Scott's daughter. Both women recalled loving the stairs as children but as adults they have become difficult to negotiate. Hence, the upstairs, which is used as bedroom space, is referred to as the "young people's quarters." Mrs. Cherry, as a wife and mother, also lived in a company town, Labuco. Her husband was a miner for ABC until he was put on disability; she worked in the office, cleaning and making lunches. After her husband's death, she came back to the family home. The back bedroom addition was constructed by Georgia Scott's husband to accommodate extended family members in bad health who had come to live with them. The house had an outside water closet when they first moved there. Plumbing was installed in the late 1940s when the rest of the block was plumbed; Bailey's Plumbing of Tenth Avenue is attributed by Mrs. Scott with plumbing all the houses on the block.

### *1326 Sipsey Street*

This dwelling originally was a three room, frame shotgun, situated on parts of Lots 10, 11, and 13 in Block 65 of the Greenwood Division of East Birmingham (Figure 44). The lot has a frontage on Sipsey Street of 21'4" and a depth of 107'3". The structure presently has an enclosed shed roofed front porch and a rear addition which was completed in 1951 (Board of Equalization Records). The building measures 14.5' by 56.4' on the exterior and is covered with five inch cove siding. Built on piers, the original length of the house was 37'10". Wrought iron columns form the corners of the enclosed front porch and screened metal windows occupy the upper half of the porch. A metal green and white striped awning covers the front porch, which measures 14'5" by 6'. On the facade, a large window 5'6" in width has replaced the original front window and the front door is situated on the right side. A rectangular attic vent appears in the gable. Flowering shrubs and bushes frame the structure and the back yard has been fenced.

As noted, the structure originally contained three rooms, all of which are 13'5" in width. The depth of the rooms is the variable measurement: the front room measures 12'9" deep, the central room 13'7", and the back room 9'10". The addition added 18'6" in length to the house, by creating an additional room, bath and hall with a side entrance. The Board of Equalization Records notes that the bath was completed by 1962. Communication within the original floor plan is conducted through doorways aligned along the right side of the house, a path begun at the front door, although the latter is not dead on with the two interior doorways. Entry to the rooms created by the 1950s addition breaks this pattern; the two doorways, from the third room to the hall and then into the back room, are not aligned and occur on the left central side of the house. The doorways in the original part of the house measured 2'7" in width, in the rear addition, 2'6". Two chimneys, a central and a side chimney, were noted. A closet is adjacent to the central chimney, which at this date has been filled in. Windows are aligned to

FIGURE 44  
1326 Sipsey Street Photograph and Plan  
Inset Shows Structure's Location Along Lot Lines



achieve cross ventilation in all the rooms except the front room, which has no window on the left side. Windows average 2'4" in width.

Hudgins and White (1985:115) assign a construction date of 1942 to the building and a description of the structure six years later occurs in the Board of Equalization Records. The tax evaluators noted that the structure contained three rooms with pine floors. At that point, the house had electricity, city water, sewer hook ups, and gas, but the bath was only equipped with a toilet. The photograph that accompanied the tax inventory shows the structure with an open porch supported by wood posts and covered by a shed roof. A swing adorned the porch and the front yard was lined with a picket fence. The front window was definitely more narrow than the window currently in place. The tax data identifies David Daniel as the owner in 1948, and the 1950 city directory shows that Daniel resided there. Hence, Daniel was probably responsible for the 1951 addition. In 1960, the house was occupied by Joshua Blake and his wife, Mary. Blake was a black mechanic who worked at MacDonald's Service Station.

The house is currently owned and occupied by Ruth B. Johnson, who purchased the house in November 1961. Mrs. Johnson had heard that the house was built by Willie B. Hall, who used to live across the street prior to the construction of the interstate. Mrs. Johnson, who works "over the mountain" as a maid, had moved to East Birmingham with her brother over thirty years ago to take advantage of the G.I. Bill. She and her brother shared a house in the neighborhood until his death. At that point she wanted to buy a house. While she wanted a larger house, she ended up with the house on Sipsey Street because it was affordable. Given her income of \$35 a week and her role as sole support of her five children, she had to work weekends to make the down payment. She was able to work because her mother lived with them, providing childcare. In her words, she has made the house what it is. When she purchased it, it was "sitting on stones." She corrected this by infilling. She also enclosed the porch, added the bay window, landscaped, and made internal changes such as enlarging the bathroom and adding closets. As the walls had been papered innumerable times, she was forced to sheet rock the house. She commented finally that the addition of the garden and the landscaping has been recent, given her working schedule, noting that when you left your house at 6:15 to get to work and put in a long day, a garden was a luxury.

#### *Old Store Building, 1334 and 1336 Coosa Street*

This commercial structure is a three bay brick building (50'1" by 40') with a flat roof (Figures 45 and 46). Detailed in concrete, the castellated parapet, the three medallions placed over each doorway, and brick headers all act to define and accentuate each bay. With the exception of Bay A, which is currently boarded over with plywood, large store windows were placed on either side of the doors, and a group of three smaller windows were placed over them. Light fixtures are visible over the doors of 1334 and 1336. A sign appears over the doorway of 1334 for "East B'ham Grill Sandwiches". A side door appears on Fourteenth Avenue and

FIGURE 45  
1334-1336 Coosa Street, Exterior and Interior Views

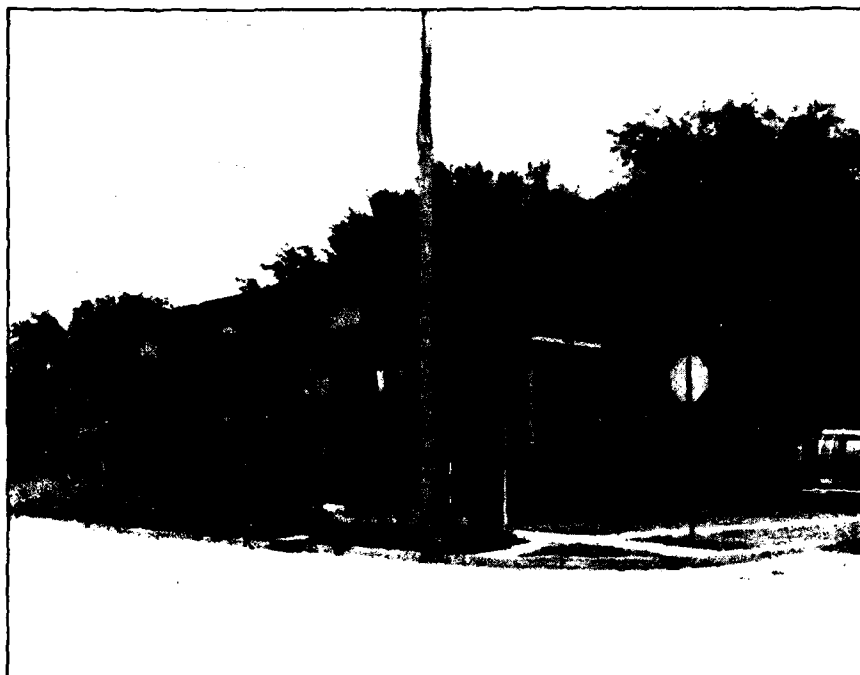
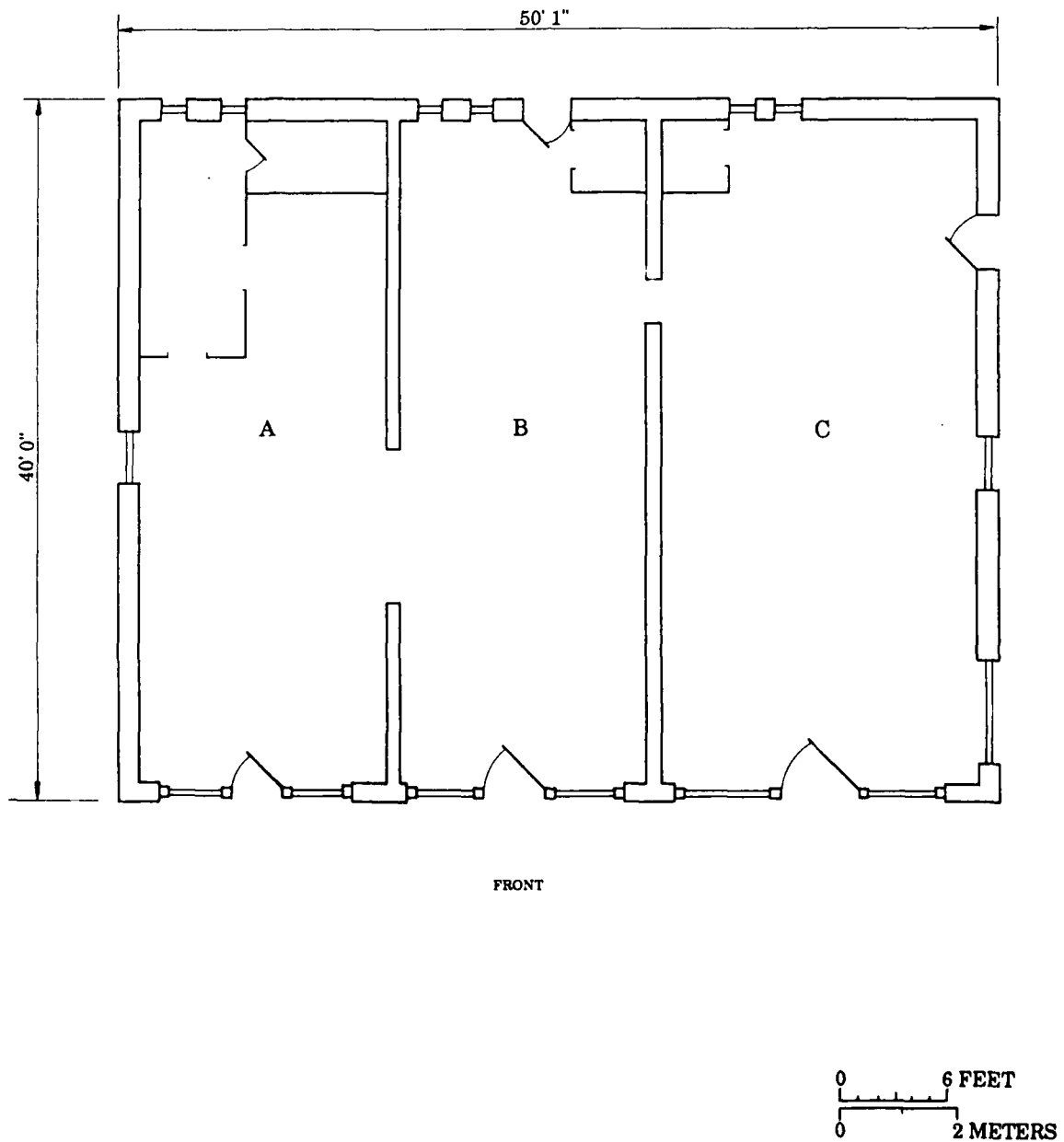


FIGURE 46  
1334-1336 Coosa Street Plan





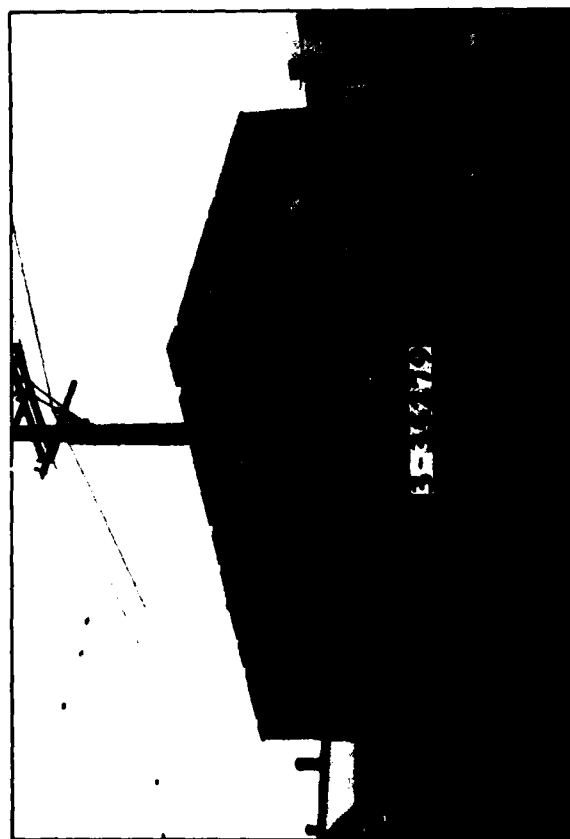
on the rear of the structure, as well as small windows. Painted advertisements on the south side of the building include an ad for Stewart Cleaners and for "Double Cola" painted on the brick.

The store building's interior has been divided into three bays corresponding with the glazed front facade. The two bays on the southern side of the structure are equal in width (14'2") while the third bay is 18' wide. A pressed tin ceiling is in evidence in all the rooms (Figure 45). Significantly, all of the bays can be accessed from the interior. A nine foot passageway interrupts the wooden partition wall between Bay "A" and Bay "B". Bay "C" is accessed from Bay "B" towards the rear of the structure. Unlike the other doorway, this passageway is only 2.9' in width. This pattern suggests that the Bays "A" and "B" have recently been used as one address. The doorway between "B" and "C" also suggests a functional unity for the structure. Restrooms are situated at the rear of the building in the southeast corner of 1336 Coosa and the southwest corner of 1334 Coosa Street.

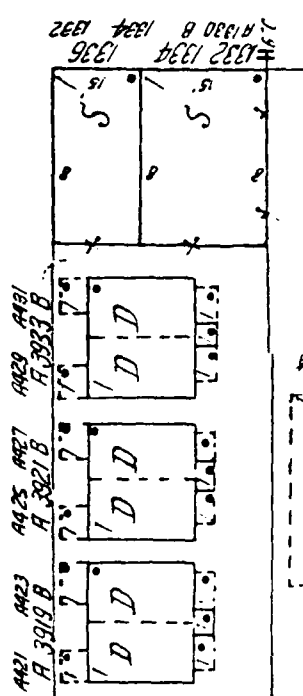
The store building was built on the Coosa Street frontage of Lots 19 and 20, Block 62 of the Klondyke Division. Prior to its construction, a frame dwelling, store and garage had occupied the lots according to the 1917 Sanborn map (Figure 47B). The frame store like others in the neighborhood extended out into the street via its porch. The earliest image of the brick store building dates to 1929 when it was drawn again in plan view by the Sanborn map company. In that year, the building had only two bays; Bay "A" and Bay "B" were joined but three street numbers were assigned to the structure 1332 through 1336 Coosa Street (Figure 47C). Also a set of three duplexes which appear to be four room cottages were built behind the store along Fourteenth Avenue North. A later Sanborn from 1929 with corrections to 1949 (Figure 47D), indicates that the building housed three different mercantile concerns at that point in time. The partitioning on the 1929-1949 map between Bay "A" and Bay "B" was wooden and continuous while a large passageway existed between bays "B" and "C". Finally, the duplex closest to the store is no longer in evidence in the most recent Sanborn map, having been replaced by a garage.

Research on the property followed two routes: land records and city directories. The first aim was to learn who owned the building and had it built, the second was to identify who used it over time. Given these lines of evidence, the estimated date of construction is 1927-1928, when the property was purchased and developed by Jacob Reznik. The lots under investigation were part of the land holdings of Mrs. N. L. S. Lunsford, her husband W. G. Lunsford, and Sterling and Ida May Wood at the turn of the century. This consortium was in possession of most of the lots defined by the Klondyke subdivision. They conveyed their holdings to W. H. Tharpe in September of 1902 for a consideration of \$7,800 (Jefferson County Deed Book 314:328-329). Documentation of the ownership of the study lots between 1902 and the late 1920s is fragmentary. Tharpe, a real estate speculator, undoubtedly sold the property, as tax records from the 1920s indicate that a frame dwelling was located on the property. Mortgage records show that in 1926, Malcolm Ware, a bachelor grocer, owned Lot 10 within Block 62 in East

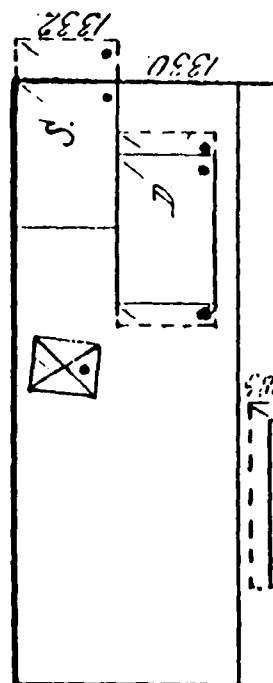
FIGURE 47  
A - 1938 Photograph of 1334-1336 Coosa Street, B - Detail from 1917 Sanborn Map,  
C - Detail from 1929 Sanborn Map, D - Detail from 1949 Sanborn Map  
(A - Jefferson County Board of Equalization Appraisal Files. Courtesy,  
Birmingham Public Library, Department of Archives and Manuscripts)



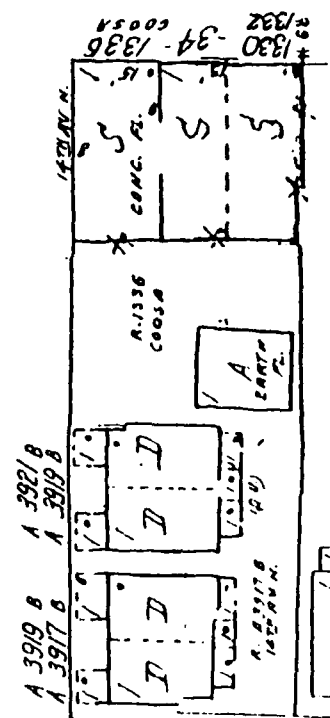
A



B. 1917



C. 1929



D. 1949

Birmingham, which had a frontage of 50' on Coosa Street (then Fitzpatrick Street) and ran 144' along Fourteenth Avenue North to a back alley.

Lot 10 was subdivided into Lots 19 and 20 as part of the Klondyke subdivision in 1903. City directories indicate that Ware operated a grocery with W. S. Scott at 1216 Tenth Avenue South between 1914 and 1920. In the early 1920s, his name was teamed with Copeland rather than Scott in an establishment still situated at the Tenth Avenue address. By March 1926, Ware was in possession of the study property, which was mortgaged by the E & F Investment Company in the amount of \$2,000 (Jefferson County Deed Book 1527:569). Ware's rationale for buying these lots is unknown, but in May of 1926, he conveyed the property to Jacob Reznik who was a "Trustee for the R & R Trust Company" for the remainder of the mortgage and \$1,000 (Jefferson County Deed Book 1587:16-17). This information plus the cartographic data suggests that Ware either owned or operated a grocery store on the corner which predated the brick commercial building which Reznik would construct.

The declaration of trust for the R & R Trust company was recorded at the Jefferson County Courthouse on May 15, 1926 between Phillip Randman and his wife Edith and Jacob Reznik and his wife Lillea (Jefferson County Deed Book 1551:539-543). The name of "R & R Trust Company" did not appear in the city directories but the occupations of the Rezniks and Randmans did. Jacob Reznik was the manager of Peoples Coal Company; he resided at 1406 Tenth Court North, while Randman was a baker living at 1303 Fourteenth Avenue South. Randman and Reznik owned in common a group of five brick stores in North Birmingham in 1927, as well as other real estate in the city (Jefferson County Tax Book, 1927). This suggests that Reznik and Randman were speculators, having some experience with commercial development. Research indicates that the trust between the Rezniks and the Randmans was never put into action. Hence, Phillip Randman and his wife and the Rezniks on September 17, 1927 conveyed Ware's property to Reznik for a consideration of \$1.00 (Jefferson County Deed Book 1783:49-50). Jacob Reznik alone was taxed in 1927 for the study lots, which were valued at \$250 given that they contained one three room frame dwelling.

On September 7, 1927, Reznik mortgaged the property to Steiner Brothers, a Birmingham banking house, in the amount of \$7,500 and then took out a second mortgage on September 27, 1927 for \$3,800 from Alex C. Birch, J. L. Drennan, and W. R. Venable, a group of Birmingham businessmen (Jefferson County Deed Book 1791:213-314). Steiner Brothers was a leading financial institution within the city having financed much of its municipal growth during the late nineteenth century (Elovitz 1974:30-31). Given the above, it appears that the buildings were constructed under Reznik's tenure in 1927-1928. This growth spurt probably included the duplexes that were built at the back of the lot and fronting on Fourteenth Avenue North. The city directories first note residents for these structures in 1928.

Reznik was unable to keep up with his payments, for the property was sold at "public outcry" for \$2,500 to Steiner Brothers, in 1934 (Jefferson County Deed

Book 2550:24-25). The property, being the east 60 feet of Lots 19 and 20 excluding the duplexes, was sold by Steiner Brothers to Henry J. Lovoy in 1947 (Jefferson County Mortgage Book 3909:353, Jefferson County Tax Assessor's Office). The 1947 City Directory identifies Lovoy as an inspector at the L&N Railroad who resided at 944 Seventeenth North. Lovoy held onto the property for four years before he sold the brick structures to Cecil and Lenora Mikwee in 1951 (Jefferson County Tax Assessor's Office). The Mikwee's were the proprietors of Ocean Fish and Grocery Company in the late 1940s (City Directory, 1947). Mrs. Lenora Mikwee is the current owner of the brick store buildings.

The building was never owner-occupied and it did not have a solid rental history. The latter was probably due to its proximity to the Tenth Street commercial district, which lessened the need for a commercial establishment at this site. A second factor in its lack of success may have been that block development was lighter in the areas north of the store. Based on the city directories, the addresses of 1334 and 1336 Coosa Street first appears in 1927 as vacancies in a block that is solidly residential, and, with the exception of one resident, Pedro Petrozollo, a grocer, black. By 1928, the complex was fully rented out. John Lamar operated a drug store at 1332, Caravella Meats occupied 1334, and Hill Grocery Company, a chain operation, tenanted 1336 Coosa. Neither Lamar nor Caravella resided on the block. John Lamar was a black druggist who resided on 4609 Fourteenth Avenue North; Mitchell Caravella resided at 1319 North Twenty-sixth Street. Lamar's operation ended by 1929, Caravella and Hill were also gone by 1935 when only 1334 Coosa was rented, as a beauty shop. Four years later all of the stores were vacant.

Surveyed in 1938 by the Board of Equalization, the building was described as having a cement floor, a tin ceiling, a stuccoed rear wall, and a sidewalk only at the front of the building. When the building was photographed in 1939 for the BOE files, only the middle store was occupied. Arnold Coal Company, which sold Cahaba Redash Coal, was the tenant. The surveyors noted that the building rented for \$25.00 a month. Two duplexes and a garage were also part of the property in 1938. The duplexes are visible on the 1939 photograph. Each of these were rented for \$10.00 per month. According to the tax records, the stores were a separate property by 1947, belonging to Henry Lovoy.

The 1940s saw a resurgence of interest in the structures. At the beginning of the decade, Angelo Tombrello began to sell groceries at 1336 Coosa. Interestingly, he and his wife Mary are listed as living at the same address. Two years later the Tombrello's were joined by Stewart Cleaners at 1334, which left only 1332 Coosa vacant. Stewart Cleaners would be listed as either 1332 or 1334 Coosa throughout the 1940s. The trio of storefronts were transformed in 1946 when John H. Rowans took over 1334 and 1336 Coosa, and Stewart Cleaners moved into 1332. Rowans, who resided at 2912 Eighth Avenue North, used 1334 Coosa as a radio repair shop and continued to operate a restaurant at 1336 which had been established by Edward Card in 1944. At this point, the structures were all rented by black tenants. The city directory noted that this branch of Stewart Cleaners was a black franchise, and listed other black cleaners within the

Stewart Company. James C. Edward, a black man, and Smith R. Oliver (race not noted) were the managers. Neither Oliver or Edward resided in the neighborhood. Stewart Cleaners would be the only commercial firm to continue at this corner from the 1940s through the late 1950s.

The space at 1332 remained a combined cleaners and barber shop operation until 1968 when a record store appeared at that address. In 1976, it became the club house for the True Riders Motor Cycle Club, which it still hosted in the early 1980s. Rowans' radio repair shop (1334 Coosa) became the East Birmingham Radio and TV Service in 1950-51. Run by a neighborhood man, James A. Jackson, who resided at 1421 Apalachee Street, this venture was unsuccessful, for the shop was vacant in two years, and, Jackson, according to subsequent city directories, had changed his occupation. In 1958, Irene Mason, a resident of 1524 Sipsey Street, established the East Birmingham Grill Restaurant at that address. Mrs. Mason and her sister, Mrs. Lucy Sims, also of 1524 Sipsey Street, ran the restaurant until the late 1970s, when the space was listed as vacant (Rosa Skinner, personal communication 1989). Finally, 1336 Coosa Street became the Jennings Pool Room in 1958, run by Calvin Jennings who resided at 1219 Cahaba Street. This space remained a pool hall until 1985 albeit under different managements. The building appears to have been last used by the motorcycle group as a clubhouse and garage.

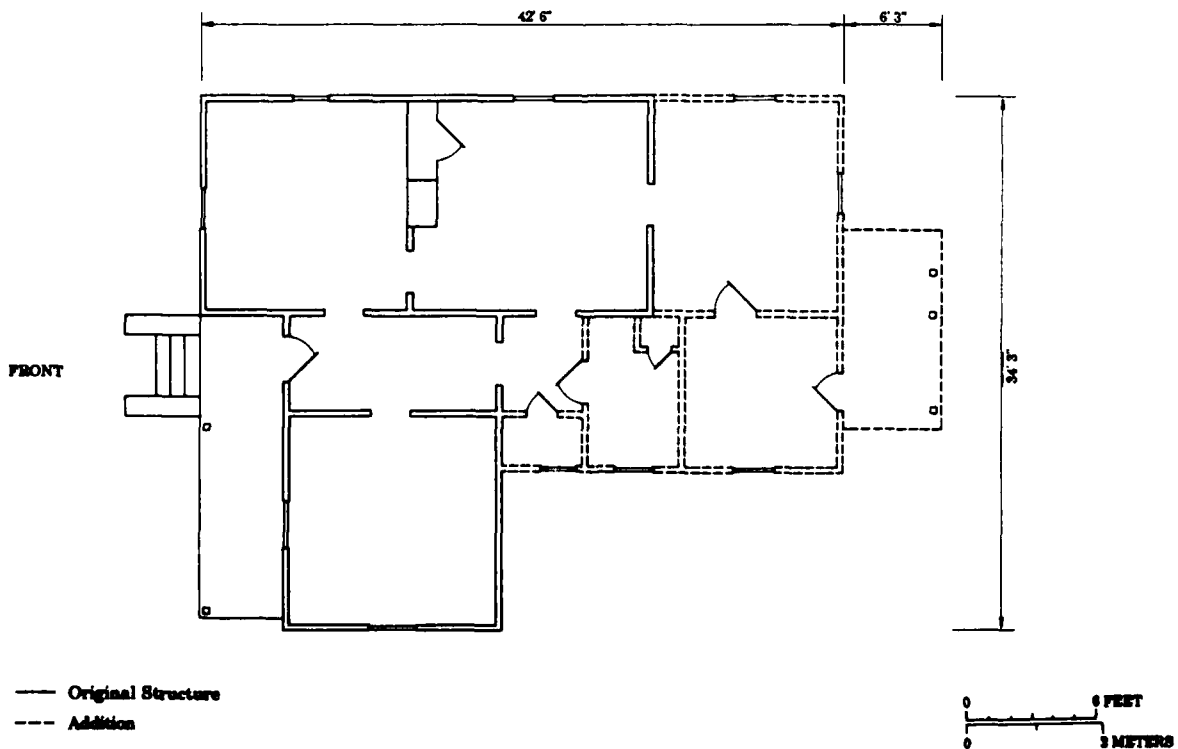
#### *1419 Apalachee Street*

This building is a T-shaped cottage with an L-shaped frame rear addition (Figure 48). An open front porch with a shed roof and striped metal awning occupies the length of the facade adjacent to the projecting bay. Concrete steps lead to the porch, which is supported by turned posts. The bay's gable is fully pedimented with wooden shingles. The exterior of the house measures 34'3" in width and 42'6" deep and sits on an infilled pier foundation.

The L-shaped addition hugs the rear of the house, containing four rooms and a porch. A large room was added to the rear on the northeast corner of the house, altering the basic "T" configuration. Three smaller rooms: a kitchen, bath, hall and closets, were placed to the rear of the central hall, giving the overall plan an irregular shape. The addition added 12'6" to the entire depth of the building, and covered a portion of the rear of the dwelling. A small wooden porch with a shed roof is attached to the rear of the addition.

The layout of the original rooms conforms to the T-shaped cottage type. Access to the rear additions is gained by the central hallway or through the middle room on the left side. Interestingly, the back rooms must be accessed through the rooms on the left side of the structure, and the bath can only be entered through the hallway. The Board of Equalization Records show a different plan view of the house when it was surveyed in December of 1938. This figure indicates the sequence of the additions. The house's original configuration was a "T", but by 1938 the third room had been added to the rear of the house elongating the left side. A small room (5' x 6') and an open side porch were also evident, located on the right side of what had become by this date an irregularly shaped

FIGURE 48  
1419 Apalachee Street Photograph and Plan



building. The small room was probably a bath. This suggests that the remaining addition in the central area of the back of the house postdates 1938. The early survey also shows a coal house built of "2nd hand lumber" situated to the right of the house.

The tax records estimate the age of the structure to be 35 years old in 1938. The structure is located on two lots: 27 and 28 of the Klondyke Subdivision, measuring 50' by 144'. While the evaluators noted some improvements such as city water, sewer hook up, and electricity, and that the Sloss Railroad was on the street in front of the lot, they noted that the building was in poor shape. Despite this, it was rented in 1938 for \$9.00 a month by its owner at that point, The Trustees Investment Corporation. The earliest city directory listing for the cottage was 1909 when J. G. Washington, a brakesman, occupied it. The Washingtons continued to occupy the building through 1930. Laura Washington, a laundress, was listed for that year. By 1940, Cullen L. Byrd, a laborer at Stockham's, was living there and by 1950, James and Rebecca Cowan had purchased the house and resided there. Mr. Cowan was also an employee at Stockham's. The house is currently rented but is still owned by Rebecca Cowan.

#### *1421 Apalachee Street*

This is an example of a traditional shotgun house, one room wide and three rooms deep, built on brick piers with an exterior finish of five inch cove siding (Figure 49). A small wooden shed roofed addition and open porch are attached to the rear of the building. The width of the structure is 14'4" and it is 46'4" deep. The front porch is accessed by wooden stairs and the porch is supported by wooden posts. The exterior dimensions of the original structure are 14'4" by 38'3". The depth of the building was increased by 8'1" when the addition was attached. The addition is 6'5" wide, the rear porch lines the remainder of the back.

In this structure, the front and central rooms are deeper than the back room by approximately three feet. The front and central rooms share a fireplace, and the central room has a closet adjacent to the fireplace. The front room in this structure is used as a living room, the middle room is a bedroom, and the back room serves as a kitchen. The back addition is a bath. All windows with the exception of the bathroom window are double hung sash windows. The front window is narrow (1'11"), and has three over one lights. The other windows are two feet wide and have four over four lights. All of the side windows are aligned to allow cross ventilation.

This shotgun house is located on Lot 26 of Block 74 within the Klondyke Subdivision. A companion structure occupies Lot 25 (Figure 50A). Each of these lots had a frontage on Apalachee Street of 25' and a depth of 140'. When the building was surveyed in 1939, the house and its companion structure at 1423 Apalachee Street were owned by the heirs of M. H. Crittenden. Two outbuildings were associated with the two shotguns: a barn and a coal house. The barn was described as being built of "old box car doors, has a composition roll roof and dirt floor. Bad condition." The coal house was frame with a scrap tin roof and was

**FIGURE 49**  
**1421 Apalachee Street Photograph and Plan**

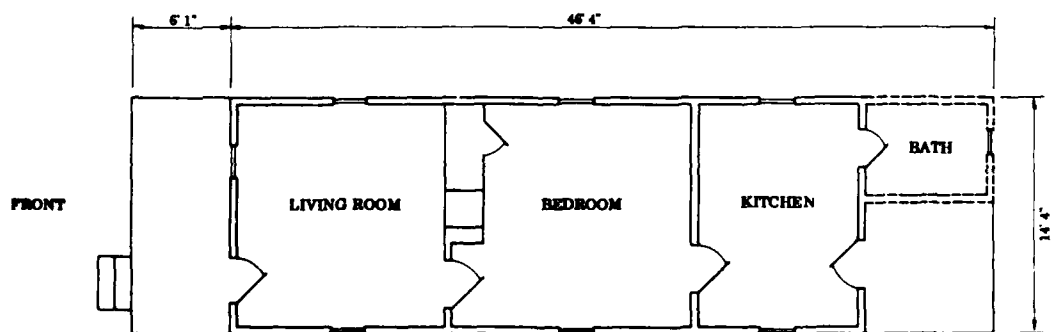
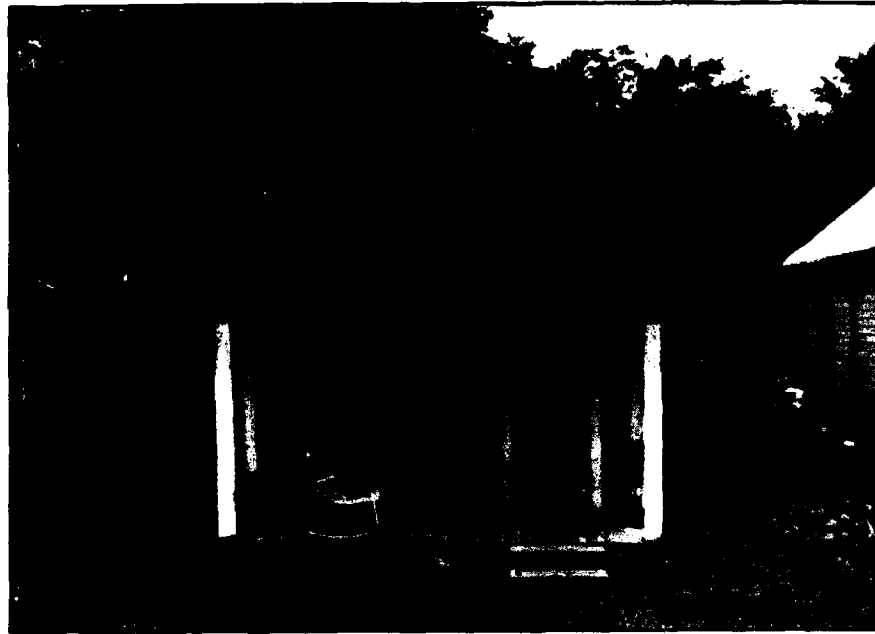


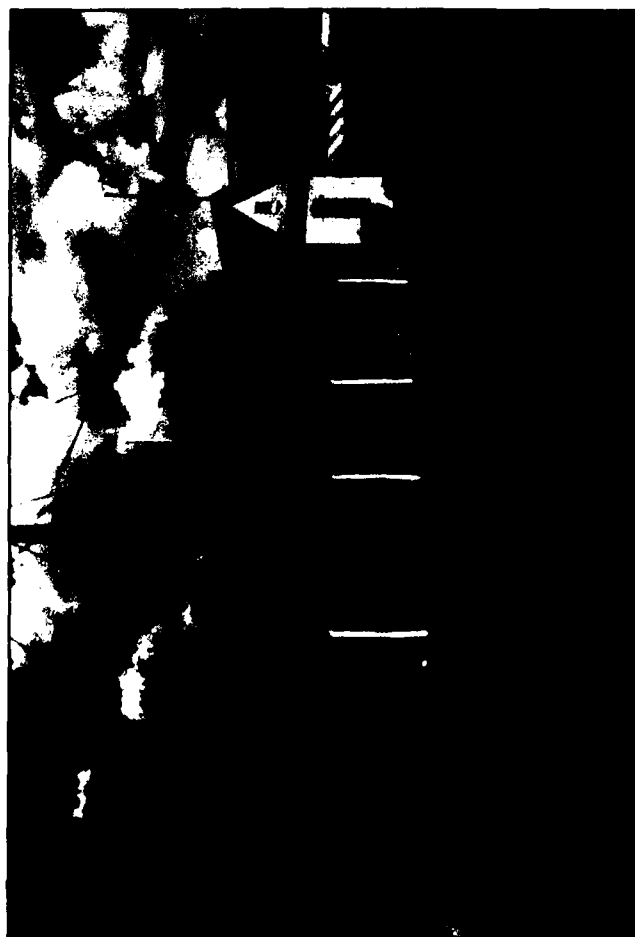


FIGURE 50

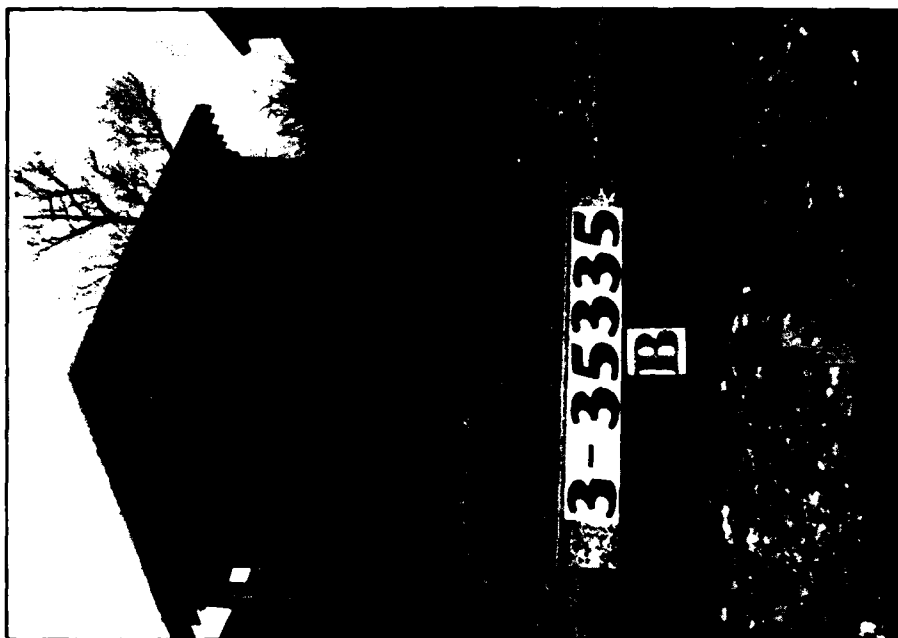
A - 1421 Apalachee Street and Its Companion Structure,

B - 1939 Photograph of 1421 Apalachee Street

(B - Jefferson County Board of Equalization Appraisal Files. Courtesy, Birmingham Public Library, Department of Archives and Manuscripts)



A.



B.

also in bad condition. The surveyor estimated that the two shotguns owned by Crittenden were twenty years old and in fair condition. The small rear addition was already in place in 1939. Sewer hook up, electricity, city water, a grate, two flues, and half baths were associated with both structures, which rented for \$7.50 a month each. Figure 50B, which shows the study structure in 1939, shows little or no landscaping or vegetation around the building. The surveyors noted that Apalachee Street had been "cherted" but not paved at that point in time.

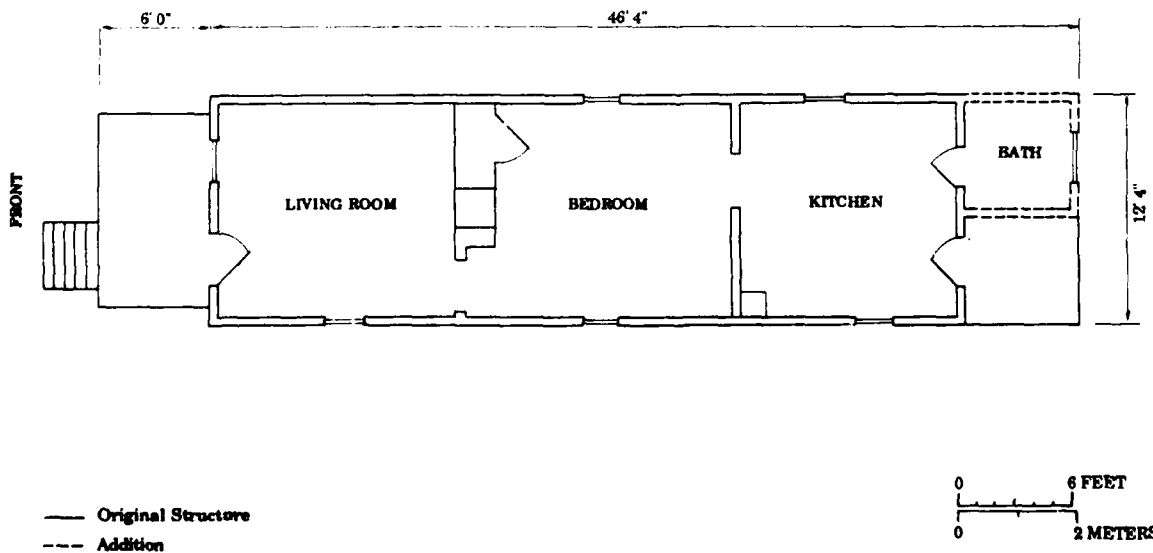
Hudgins and White (1985:115) note that a group of six houses on the 1400 block of Apalachee Street dated to 1910. The address of the companion structure appears in 1909 in the city directories, when Hattie A. Hale and George Lewis, a black laborer, resided at that address. The study structure appears later in the city directories, when Alex English, a black laborer, and his wife Mary, were identified as occupants in 1929. The shotguns are mirror images of each other, suggesting a common construction date, and the tax records support this. By 1940, Jacob Whetstone, another black laborer, resided in the house. Between 1950 and 1960, James Jackson occupied the structure. In 1950, Mr. Jackson worked at the East Birmingham Radio and TV Service which was located in the store structure at 1334 Coosa Street. The Jackson family was still listed at this address in 1960, but Mr. Jackson's was employed at Stockham's as an inspector in that year. The structure is currently handled by an agent of Southern Trust.

#### *1429 Apalachee Street*

This structure is a three room frame shotgun built upon high brick piers with porches lining the facade and rear (Figure 51). The height of the piers was no doubt predicated by the location of the structure next to Village Creek. The lot is 25' wide and 144' deep. The exterior of the house, which is covered with five inch cove siding, measures 12'6" by 46'4". Five wooden steps lead to the wooden front porch which currently has a seamed metal shed roof supported by wood posts. The porch measures 6' by 10'. The balustrade, where complete, is composed of wooden two by fours and the attic vent has been covered with plywood under the gable. A partially screened window and screen door complete the facade. The rear wooden porch has a hipped roof which covers both the porch and the bathroom. Seven windows were noted; the opening for an eighth window in the front room had been covered over. All the windows are double hung sash windows, two feet in width, with four over four lights with the exception of the rear window. The latter is a fixed window, 2'6" feet in width.

The interior of the structure is divided into three rooms with a bath appended onto the left rear of the building. The front room and back room, each 12'7" in depth are smaller than the central room which measures 14'3" deep. Two fireplaces share a chimney between the front and central rooms, a second flue, now enclosed, occurs in the right hand corner of the back room. A closet was placed to the left of the central chimney in the central room. The opening from the front room to the central room follows the path set by the front door whereas the doorway from the central room to the back room is situated on the other side of the house. The position of the second chimney in the southeast corner of the back

FIGURE 51  
1429 Apalachee Street Photograph and Plan



room predicated a change in layout. Both openings are 2'9" in width. Cross ventilation appears to have been a concern, as the window openings in the two front rooms are opposite one another. This pattern, however, does not hold for the back room.

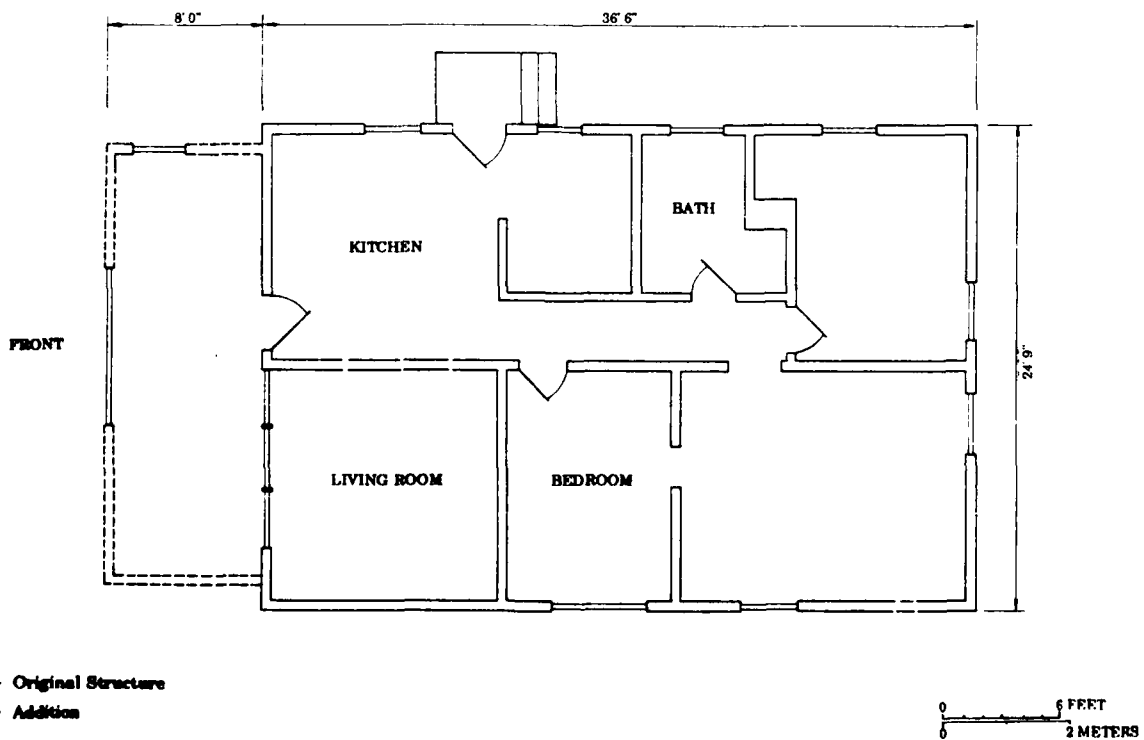
The study building is located on Lot #22 within Block 74 of the Klondyke Division of East Birmingham. The Board of Equalization records for the City of Birmingham indicate that in 1938, the structures at 1429 Apalachee (Lot 22) and 1431 Apalachee (Lot 21), were identical and were owned in common by two individuals. The fact that the buildings were identical and shared ownership suggests that the two structures share a common building date as well as builders. Hudgins and White (1985:115) offer a construction date of 1932 for the study building based on city directory research, whereas the Board of Equalization records note that the twin shotguns were constructed in circa 1918. Their condition in 1938 suggests that this earlier construction date is correct. The structure at 1431 Apalachee is no longer standing; a sandy pad shown on a current photograph indicates where it stood.

The 1938 photograph of 1431 Apalachee Street (the companion shotgun to the study structure) gives a sense of the setting within the project area at that point in time. Apalachee Street was unpaved and the Sloss railroad ran in front of the lot. The yard was unlandscaped on Lot 21; only a vine reached over the porch. A cement bridge over the creek appears in the background. Only the rear of the study structure is shown. The 1938 inventory noted improvements for both houses included electricity and sewer hook ups, and each had half baths with pine floors. Owned by M. A. Brintle and Ruby B. Adams, the houses were rented in 1938 for a monthly fee of \$6.00 (Board of Equalization Records). The 1940 city directory for Birmingham noted that the study structure was inhabited by Neal Baxter, a black laborer at Stockham Pipe Fitting Company in East Birmingham. A decade later, Ethel Walter was listed as the resident of the building, and in 1960, Charles Horton and his wife Mattie occupied the house. Horton, according to the city directories, was a helper at the Thomas Foundries. The building is currently vacant.

### *1433 Apalachee Street*

This structure is a six-room bungalow with a front addition (Figure 52). A gable roof covers the main part of the house, and a second gable covers the front addition. A metal window with four lights is centrally located on the facade. Entry to the house is obtained by two side entrances; one leading into the front addition, the second entry, covered by a small open porch with a shed roof and wooden supports, leading to the main part of the house. The exterior finish of aluminum siding covers the original five inch cove siding. Metal windows have also replaced the original window types. The structure is currently 24'9" wide and 44'6" deep; the original structure was 36'6" deep. The yard is fenced with chain link, gates provide access to the side yard which is used as a driveway. Wood planking has been laid over a ditch outside the driveway gates and some

FIGURE 52  
1433 Apalachee Street Photograph and Plan



small shrubs and flowering plants are planted at the front of the house along the fenceline.

The front door opens into an enclosed porch which is 22'5" wide and 8' deep. A large room, the width of the house and 11'6" deep, is the first room encountered in the main part of the house. As the remains of an old partition are still visible, this space was apparently once divided in half. A central hallway (3' wide) leads to the rear of the house, which has three rooms and a bath. Two of the back rooms were closed off by the occupant, and thus were inaccessible for measurement. The bedroom on the right side measures 11'6" wide and 8'8" deep. The kitchen is adjacent to the living room on the left side of the house and is accessed through the living room and the side door.

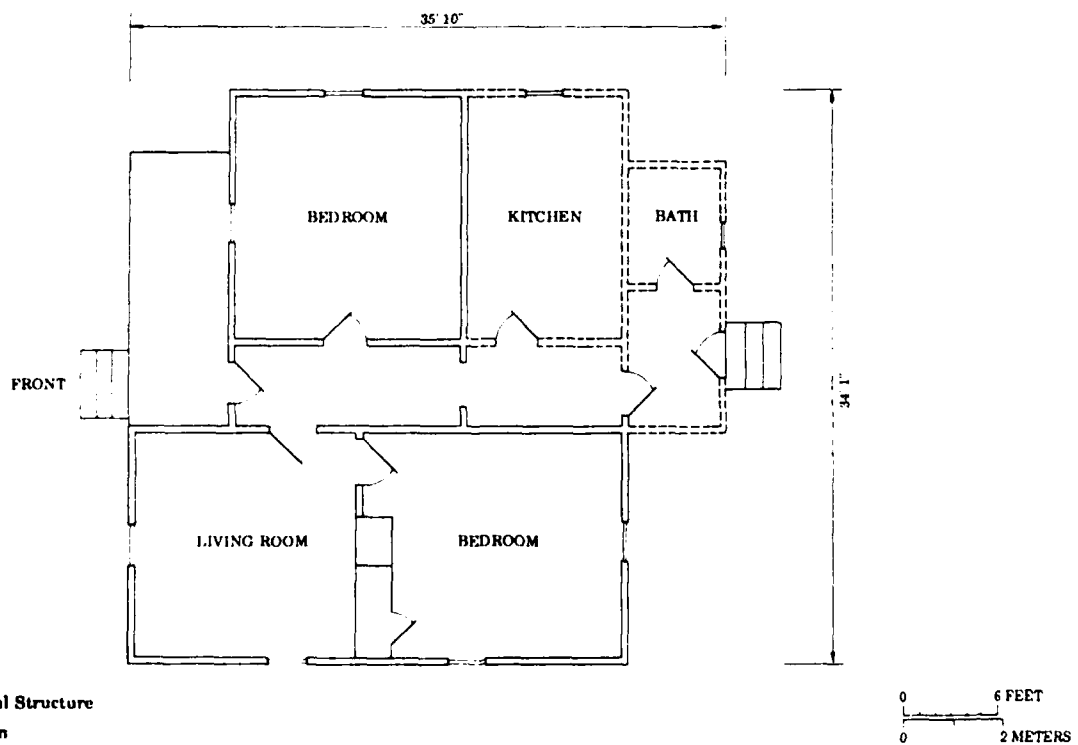
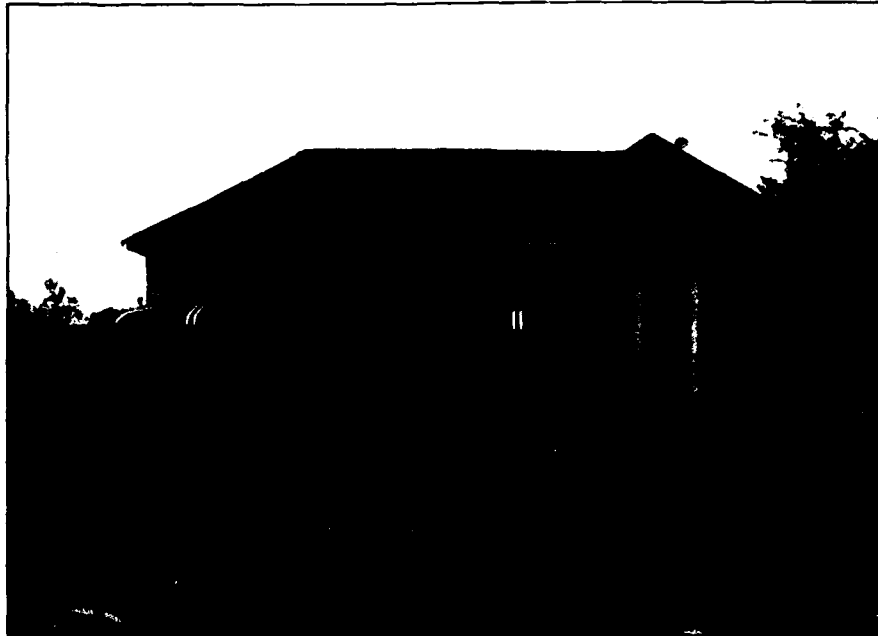
The Board of Equalization records note that in 1939 this was a vacant lot, and the address was not listed until 1962. By that date, the structure was located on Lot 24 (25' x 144') of Block 74 of the Klondyke Subdivision. It was owned and occupied by James Whatley. The alterations to the facade must have occurred after 1962, as the plan and photograph taken in 1962 show an attached porch on the left side of the house. A defined walkway leads to the porch which was reached by a set of cement stairs. The flowers and shrubs currently in the yard still follow the line of the walkway. The changes to the house have been undertaken by the Whatley family, who still own the structure.

#### *1606 Tombigbee Street*

This structure is an example of a three room "T" cottage with rear additions (Figure 53). Concrete steps lead to a partial front porch, with a shed roof and striped metal awning. The porch lines the facade and is supported by wrought iron columns. Narrow, elongated, windows, particularly in the gable, characterize the cottage. The exterior, covered with asbestos shingles, measures 34'1" across the front and 35'1" deep, sitting on an infilled pier foundation. The rear additions were completed in two episodes; the earlier addition attached a kitchen to the rear, squaring the back configuration of the structure. The addition measured 20'4" by 9'7". This addition continued the central hallway to the back of the house so that both the front and back, as well as the interior doorway between the rooms, are in alignment. A second addition (16'1" by 5'1") was placed to the rear of the kitchen, creating a pantry and bath. A set of concrete steps with matching dimensions lead to the front entrance and from the back door to the yard.

The structure originally had three rooms and a central hall. Currently the room to the left of the hall is used as a bedroom as is the back room. The front room, a sitting room, shares a fireplace with the back room. The latter has a closet adjacent to the fireplace. Both the back bedroom and sitting room are square measuring 13'5" on a side. The other bedroom to the left of the hall is 14'3" wide and 13'4" deep; the original central hallway (4'9" in width) is also 13'4" deep. As noted above, the earlier addition continued the central hallway to the back of

FIGURE 53  
1606 Tombigbee Street Photograph and Plan



the house, adding 9'1" to its length while maintaining the same width. All of the windows in the structure except the window in the bath are 2'4" in width and are double hung sash windows. The bathroom window is fixed and is 1'6" in width.

This house is located on Lot 5 on Block 98 of the Greenwood Subdivision of East Birmingham. Hudgins and White (1985:115) estimate the date of construction for the building to be 1912, although its first listing in the city directories occurred in 1919-20 when William Jelks, a miner, resided there. Estelle Smith occupied the house between 1930 and 1940 according to the city directories for those years. Mrs. Smith was the owner, according to the 1938 tax records, which list the following improvements: sewer, electricity, city water, two grates, two flues and a half bath. The house was floored in pine. A coal house was attached to the property. The 1938 plan shows that the kitchen had been added to the cottage by that year. The accompanying photograph shows turned posts supporting the porch and little or no landscaping, as opposed to the current appearance of the front yard (Figure 54). By 1950, Shelley Barnes, a laborer at Stockham's, had taken up residence, and ten years afterward, Estelle Barnes, a descendant, was listed as the occupant.

The house is currently owned and lived in by Georgia Mosley, who is Estelle Smith's sister. Mrs. Mosley was born in Mississippi in 1894; she migrated to Birmingham with her husband in 1919. Both Mrs. Mosley and her husband were agricultural workers before coming to Birmingham; her husband worked for L&N railroad after the move. Mrs. Mosley recalls that her sister and her husband, also a railroad worker, had purchased the house in 1927-28 but lost it during the Depression. Mrs. Smith "redeemed" the house afterwards and continued to live in the house with her descendants until her death in 1967. Georgia Mosley, who worked as a domestic, moved into the house in 1968. Mrs. Mosley, who has lived in loghouses in Mississippi, "double tenant homes" and cottages, characterized her current home as a "little country house." The extent of the changes to the house known to her include the construction of the back shed, which she helped to build and her sister used to rent, and repairs to the porch. Her experience in the "double tenant house," a six room cottage with three rooms to a side, located somewhere on Seventeenth Street included cooking on a kerosene stove and having an outside water closet, which had a tank that was emptied by the sanitation department once a week. Lon Butler, a carpenter, also occupies the house with Mrs. Mosley. He is also a nonagenarian.

#### *1622 Tombigbee Street*

This structure is a companion to 1624 Tombigbee described below (Figure 55). It is a four room frame cottage, measuring 31'9" by 28' on the exterior, and built on brick piers. The front rooms measure 12'6" wide and 13'3" deep. The back room's dimensions are 13'3" in width and 12'3" in depth. The front central chimney has been replaced by a pipe. Deviations from the interior plan of 1624 Tombigbee include the placement of the exterior and interior doorways and the rear addition of two rooms and an open wood porch. It appears that the builder attempted to align the front and back doorways with the interior doorway to allow



**FIGURE 54**  
**1938 Photograph of 1606 Tombigbee Street**  
(Jefferson County Board of Equalization Appraisal Files. Courtesy,  
Birmingham Public Library, Department of Archives and Manuscripts)

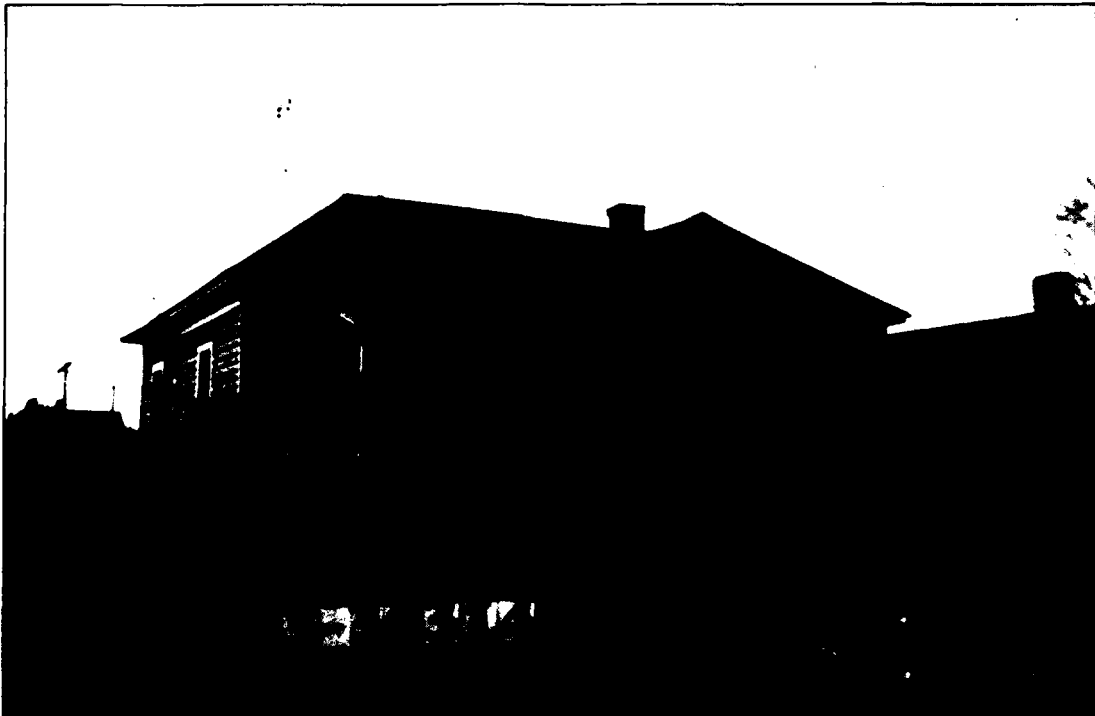
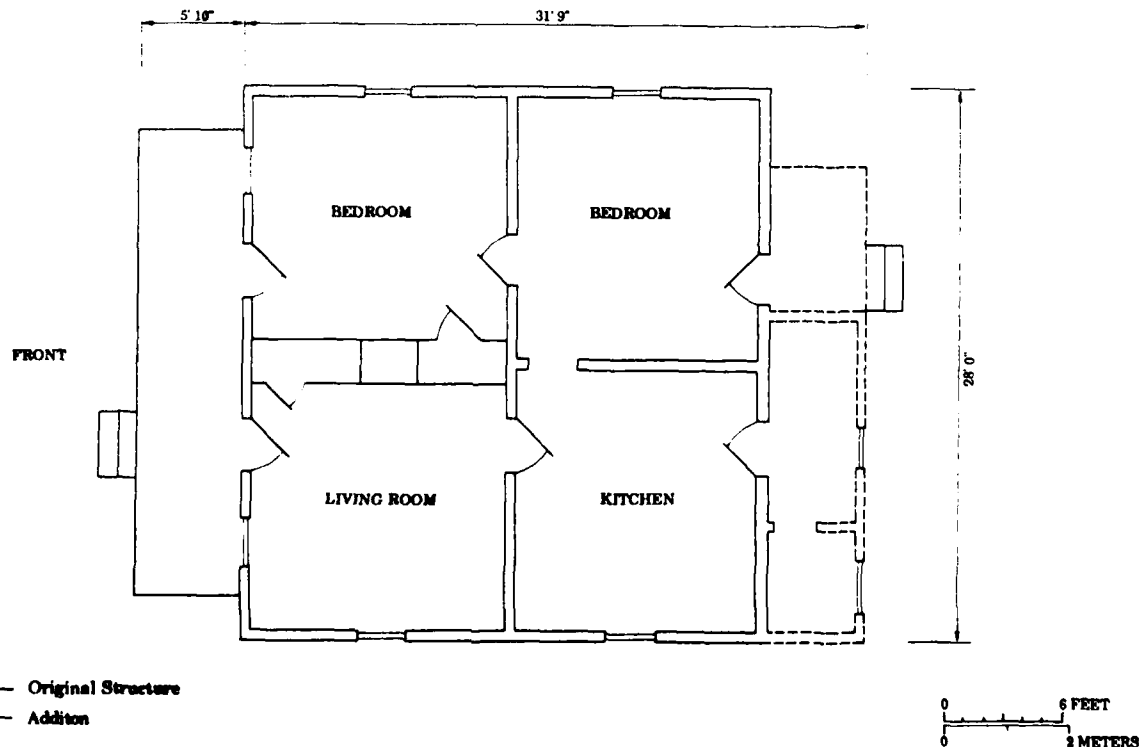
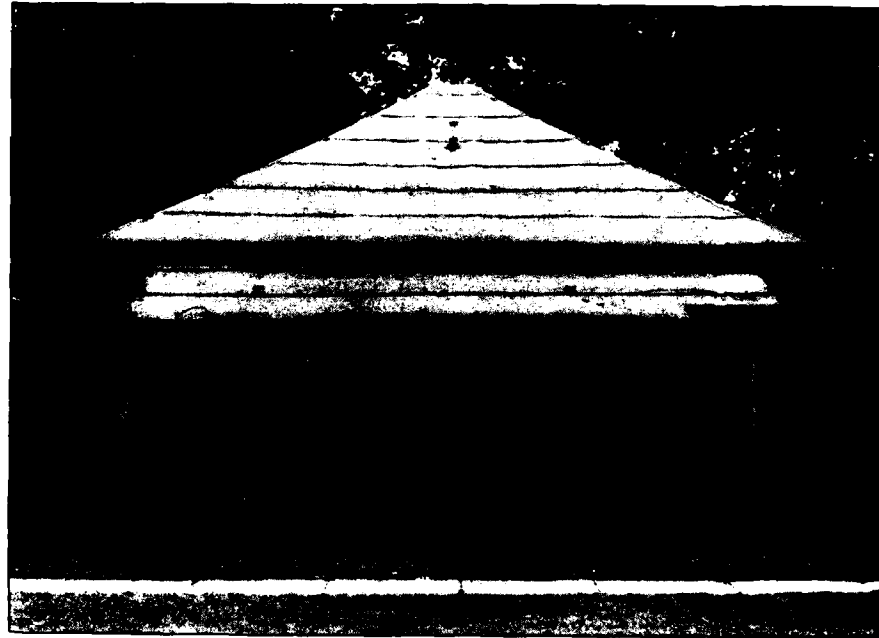


FIGURE 55  
1622 Tombigbee Street Photograph and Plan



an uninterrupted access from the front to the back of the house. The interior doorway on the left side of the house is slightly off the mark, but the interior doorway on the right side of the house is in alignment. The second deviation from the neighboring structure is the placement of the connecting doorway. This doorway was aligned in 1624 Tombigbee Street with the position of the side windows in the middle of the wall. The connecting doorway in 1622 Tombigbee Street is positioned closer to the front room.

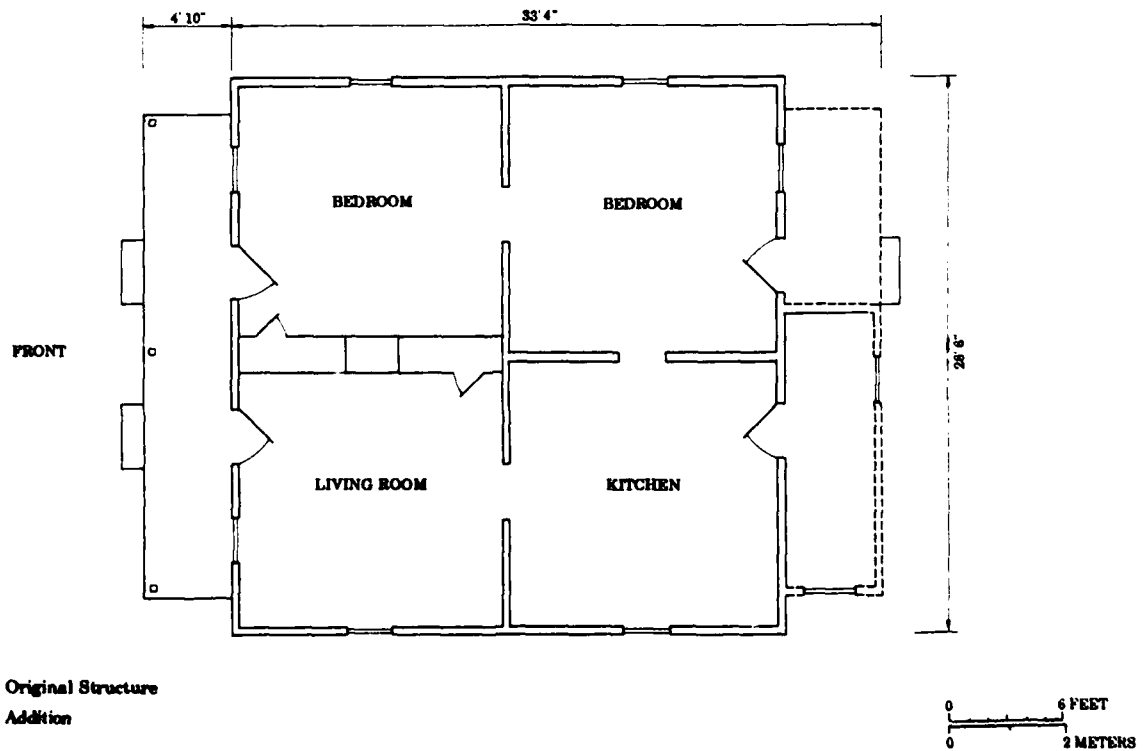
The development of the rear addition is suggested by the Board of Equalization records. When surveyed in 1938, a coal house was in the process of being built onto the right rear of the structure. The placement of this coal house corresponds to the small room within the shed addition. An open porch attached to the house and abutting the coal house was in evidence at that point in time. It appears that a portion of that porch was enclosed for use as a room and the remainder of the porch was left intact. The Board of Equalization records show that the structure was tenanted at the time of the first survey for a rental of \$11.00 a month and that the study structure was owned by S.J. Price. A fuller discussion of the development of the block by Price, a speculator, is found with the description of the house at 1624 Tombigbee Street below. In 1963, each half of 1622 Tombigbee Street was rented for \$30.00 a month. Improvements listed are the same as those at 1624 Tombigbee, although the half bath is noted as being in poor condition along with the floors. A photograph of the structure circa 1940 shows two flues; the front chimney and a chimney on the left rear of the structure.

Hudgins and White (1985:129) date the building to circa 1922, when it was first occupied by John Maddox, a black laborer. Cicero and Ada L. Hagler occupied it three years later. Mr. Hagler's occupation as a laborer was identified but not his place of business. The structure was vacant in 1930 but in 1940, Ann Ziegler, a cook, was listed at this address. The 1950 directory again noted only one family for the address: Monroe C. and Irene Curry. While the directory identified the Curry's as a black family, no occupations were listed for either of the Curry's. Hudgins and White (1985:90) note that the structure housed married laborers during the 1920s and 1930s and that it was used as a duplex between 1956 and 1960. James and Leola Gosha were listed as residents of 1622A and 1622B in 1960. The Gosha's resided at this address until 1980; James Gosha's occupation was listed as a machine operator at Stockham's. During their residence the porch was filled with porch furniture and the front yard was replete with potted plants (Hudgins and White 1985). Although this structure was originally characterized as a duplex in the tax records and through the 1960s, it appears to have been mostly used as a single family dwelling. The structure is currently vacant.

#### *1624 Tombigbee Street*

This dwelling is a four room frame cottage built on brick piers which has been converted from a duplex into a single family home (Figure 56). Two rooms wide and two rooms deep with a pyramidal roof, the building measures on the exterior 28'6" by 33'6" and is covered with five inch horizontal clapboard. A partial front porch (26'4" by 4'10") with a hipped roof covering the front doors and

**FIGURE 56**  
**1624 Tombigbee Street Photograph and Plan**



windows is supported by wood posts. Porch furniture includes a metal chaise and two chairs, and screens and a screen door appear. Two sets of concrete steps allows entry to the front porch; a wooden railing is in evidence on the left set of steps. An interior chimney is prominently placed on the front side of the roof. A bath and open porch have been added to the rear of the house; both the porch and bath have shed roofs.

The front rooms measure 12'8" in width and 13'5" deep while the back rooms are 13'3" wide and 13'6" deep. Interior features include a central chimney shared by the front rooms and abutted on both sides by a closet for each room. The six windows in these rooms are all 2'5" wide. The front and back entryways are aligned with one another, while the interior doorways between the front and back rooms are centrally located. Side windows are also aligned, and the opening made between the duplexes, converting them to a single dwelling, is also in alignment with the side windows.

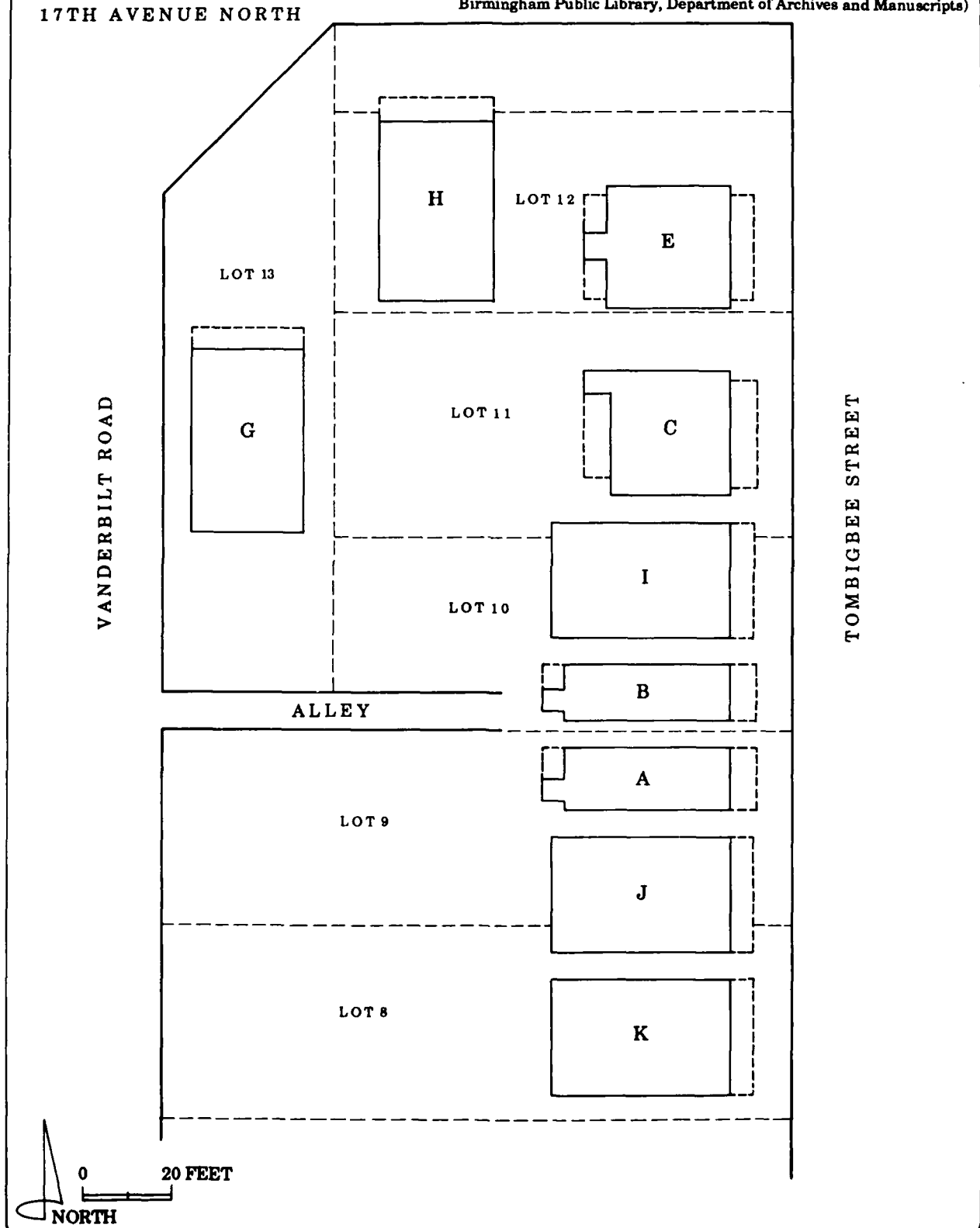
Historical information on the structure indicates that S. J. Price of Birmingham owned it and eight other structures built on Lots 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 12 1/2 and 13 of Block 98 within the Greenwood subdivision in the 1940s. This includes 1622 Tombigbee Street described above. Mr. Price, a native of Virginia who moved to Birmingham in 1909, was the vice-president of the Birmingham Stove and Range Company. In addition, he owned a number of real estate properties around the city. His East Birmingham properties were purchased probably in the late 1930s or early 1940s. According to his son, S. J. Price Jr. (personal communication 1989), at the time of purchase, the two shotguns were already in place. The other structures were added to the lots in different building episodes built by contractors who probably used black labor. The 1929 Sanborn map (see Figure 20) shows both study structures in place as well as the shotgun houses at that date. The purchase of the lots was predicated on the fact that there was a demand in East Birmingham for cheap rental properties at the time.

The property which stretches along one side of Tombigbee Street remained intact until the highway was built in 1972, which took a portion of Lots 12 and 13 and called for the relocation of one of the houses (Figure 57). A plan of the Price holdings was completed for the Board of Equalization Records which shows the placement of the structures on the contiguous lots. Significantly, houses were built irrespective of lot lines. Building "J" for example is straddled between Lot 8 and Lot 9. There was a similar treatment of Lots 10 and 11, which hold three structures, two duplexes and a shotgun. This treatment within the lots was probably due to the earlier shotgun houses which were placed on the north half of Lot 9 and the south half of Lot 10. This suggests two possibilities. First, that the earlier owner had left space on each lot to build a companion shotgun for each lot or that the previous owner only owned a half of each lot. Both shotguns share the same dimensions. The structures built by S. J. Price were all duplexes. Five of the duplexes had a total of eight rooms, having four rooms to a side, while the other two were four room cottages having two rooms to a side.

FIGURE 57

Plan of S. J. Price's Landholdings and Rental Properties in 1962

(Jefferson County Board of Equalization Appraisal Files. Courtesy, Birmingham Public Library, Department of Archives and Manuscripts)



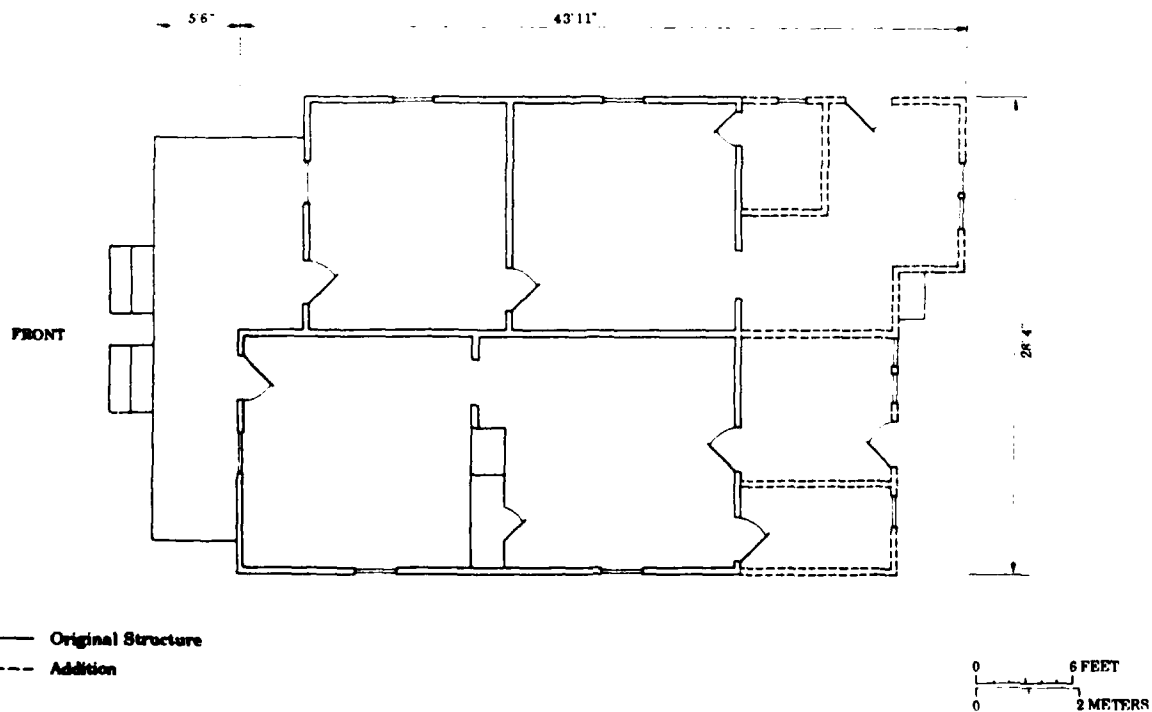
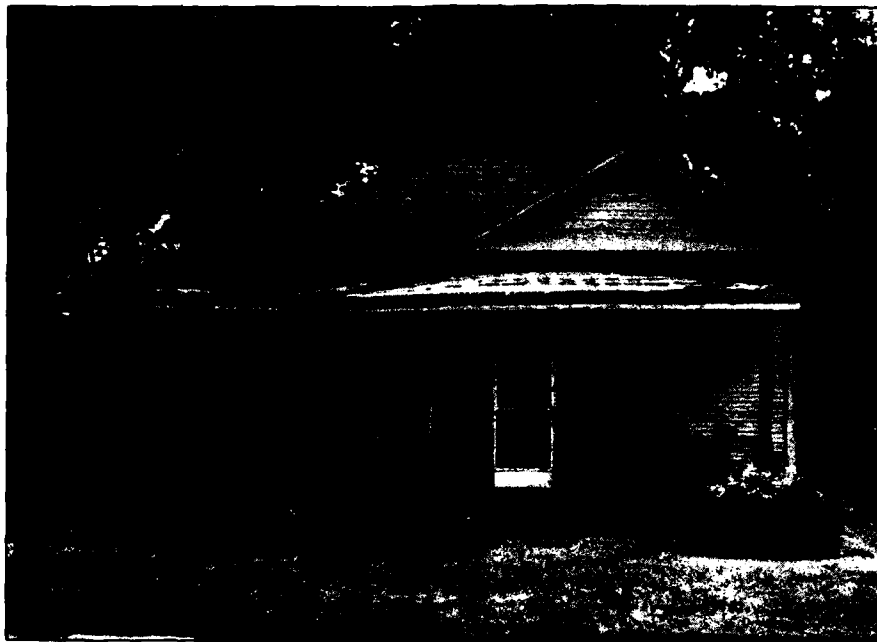
The study structure, 1624 Tombigbee, lies in Lot 12 within this grouping; the lot's dimensions are 45' by 104' (Building "E" on 1972 Plan). It does not share the lot with another structure. The Board of Equalization records notes that the study structure was a four room duplex in 1940 which had an unattached one story garage "beyond repair". Improvements included sewer, electricity, city water, a furnace for heat, and a half bath. The front porch is shown as being supported by wood posts on brick piers. It was occupied by a tenant at a monthly rent of \$11.00 and the interior of the house was categorized as being in fair condition. The form notes that Tombigbee Street was unpaved at this point in time. Hudgins and White (1986:115) give a date of 1932 for the construction of this house, noting that the directories list Lee Smith, a black packer at this address at that date. Carrie Goy, a black woman, is listed for 1940, and in 1960, Bama and Maddox Anderson, a laborer at the Vulcan Rivet and Bolt Company, occupied the structure. No listing was found for 1950. It is currently tenanted by George Battle and is still owned by S. J. Price, Jr. Mr. Battle, a retired construction worker lived at this address for twenty years. He has lived in East Birmingham on different blocks of Tallapoosa Street for an additional 32 years. His move to Tombigbee Street was forced by the oncoming construction of the interstate. As a renter he has made no changes to the house and feels that in general he lives in a pretty nice neighborhood.

#### *1622 Warrior Street*

Although characterized as a "T" cottage by Hudgins and White (1985:115), the floorplan suggests a closer affinity to a four room cottage with a projecting bay on the west side of the facade (Figure 58). The structure is two rooms wide and two rooms deep with wooden frame additions on the rear; the structure rests on piers. A pyramidal roof covers the main portion of the house; the front bay has a gable roof. An L-shaped, open porch, supported by turned posts, lines the facade. A door and window occupy either side of the facade, indicating the use of the structure as a duplex. A stuccoed chimney appears on the west side of the main roof. The exterior is covered with wooden shiplap and its dimensions are 28'4" wide and 43'11" deep.

The floorplan shows two rooms on either side of the original structure. The rooms on the east side of the structure are 13'6" wide, and the rooms on the west side are approximately the same, being 13'4" wide. All of the rooms vary in depth. The front room on the east side is 11'8" while the back room is 13'4". The plan shows an attempt on the part of the builder to align doorways, shotgun style, on this side of the structure. On the west side, the front room measures 13'6" deep, and the back, 14'1". The rooms on the west side share a fireplace, and the back room has a closet adjacent to the fireplace. Both sides of the structure have two-room, rear additions. The doorways on this side of the building, unlike those on the other side, are not aligned; the front entryway and the first interior passage are next to the party wall, while the remaining entries are located centrally on the back and interior wall. The original back entrance on the east side has been closed off leaving no interior access to the rear room, which has a corner

FIGURE 58  
1622 Warrior Street Photograph and Plan





chimney. The bath is entered from the interior. The windows on the additions on both sides of the house are hinged, while the windows on the original structure are double hung sash windows, 2'4" in width, having two over two lights.

The Board of Equalization Records help to decipher the history of the house, which is located on Lot 9, Block 99 of the Greenwood Subdivision. When visited in 1939, the structure was a four room cottage which rented for \$13.00 (Figure 59). Two outbuildings, a coal house and a shed, were on the property. The original roof was tin and the structure had a half bath, city water, sewer hook up, and electricity. The dwelling was later converted into a duplex, the interior doorways were sealed off between the sides, and a front door was added to the bay on the facade. The 1939 plan also shows a different configuration for the rear of the house. At that date, a 6' by 6' room, probably a bath, was appended to the back on the west and an open porch completed the back side. This space was either enlarged or torn down and rebuilt, as the current dimensions of the room occupying the same area do not approximate those on the 1939 plan. The records indicate by 1963 that the structure had been converted to a duplex and that the rear addition had been added by that time.

This address was first listed in the city directory in 1914, when Fayette Lisby, a black laborer, occupied the dwelling. The 1922 directory lists a Lafayette Lisby while the 1925 directory lists a Fate Gillespie at that address. These appear to reflect a difference of pronunciation rather than a change in occupancy. Henry King and his wife occupied the house in 1930. Mr. King was a baker who worked with the Home Baking Company. Mrs. W. H. Osborne, who resided in West End, was the owner in 1938, and she rented the house for \$13.00 a month. Rosa Stovall, a black laundress, moved into the house ten years later, and Jimmie Thomas, a black laborer at Loveman's, resided there in 1950. The house is currently owned and occupied by the Brown family. Fannie and Freeman Brown purchased the house in 1959. They had lived previously at 2028 Thirty Seventh Street North. Mr. Brown, who died in 1961 was a retired worker for the L&N railroad. Mrs. Brown was born in rural Alabama; she came to Birmingham in 1944, at first living with a friend and doing "cafe work." Her previous home had been an L&N company house, which she characterized as a "country house" with few amenities (Fannie Brown, personal communication 1989). It had had an outside toilet, a grate for heat, kerosene for lighting and outside water supply. In comparison, her Warrior Street home had electricity and gas when they moved there. She described her current house as "old fashioned," with a small kitchen. During her ownership the porch has been replaced twice, the kitchen floor repaired, the rooms had been papered and the position of the commode has been altered to garner more space. The other half of the house has been sporadically used as a rental property. Currently the two connecting doors are sealed off. When the family has used both sides of the building, they would use one side for a living room and a dining room and the other for bedrooms. That side of the house is currently occupied by a granddaughter and her family.

**FIGURE 59**

**1939 Photograph of 1662 Warrior Street**

(Jefferson County Board of Equalization Appraisal Files. Courtesy,  
Birmingham Public Library, Department of Archives and Manuscripts)



*3956 13th Avenue North*

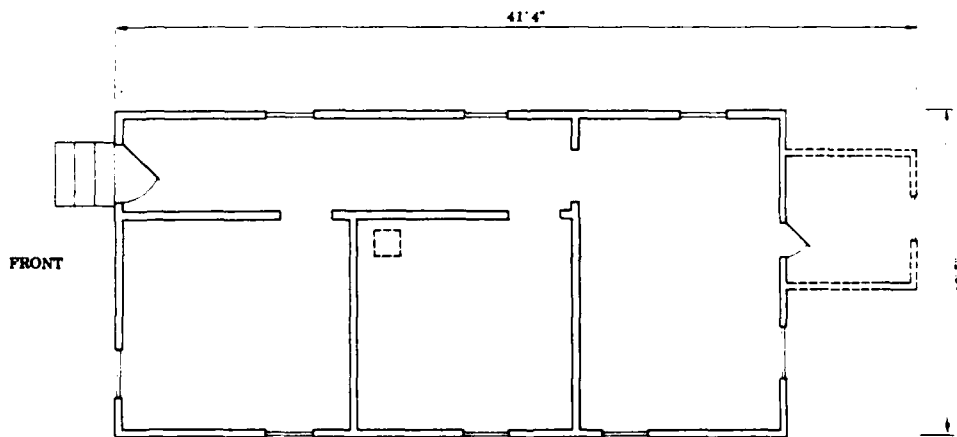
This structure is an example of a frame three room shotgun built on piers, with a side hall (Figure 60). A small shed addition has been placed on the rear of the building. The building is currently located on parts of Lots 2 and 3 within Block 65 of the Lincoln City Subdivision. A doorway ornamented with a bracketed gable-roofed hood, a double hung sash window with four over four lights and shutters, and a square attic vent complete the facade. Three cement steps allow entry to the house, which is covered with both shiplap and five inch cove siding. The exterior of the structure measures 16'5" by 41'4". The original depth of the building was 34'4". Eight double hung sash windows pierce the structure, all of which measure 2'4" in width. Seven windows have four over four lights, while the window in the addition has two over two lights.

On the interior, the structure contains a side hall extending along the west wall of the building along the first two rooms. The hall is 4'6" wide, and 23'6" long, emptying into the back room which is 14'6" wide and 10' deep. The two front rooms are both 10' wide; the front room is 11'8" deep and the central room 10'8". Windows in the two front rooms were placed opposite one another despite the fact that the hallway wall would disrupt air flow. This suggests that the hallway wall was an addition. A flue is located in the central room. Placement of the windows in the back room was not symmetrical; two doors, one leading to the addition and one to the back yard, are placed on the back wall.

Hudgins and White (1985:115) date this structure to 1920. The Board of Equalization Records first visited the structure in 1956, when it was owned by Helen D. Fiernan. The records state that the building had electricity, sewer hook up, city water, and gas heat in the 1950s. Denoted as a three room cottage with a half bath, it rented in 1956 for \$28.00 a month. The records also indicate that, prior to the 1950s, the study lot and the next lot to the east, on which a bungalow currently sits, were one property. The proximity of the bungalow east of the study building (3958 Thirteenth Avenue North) as well as the tax data suggests that the study structure was built prior to the bungalow.

The Birmingham city directory for 1925 did not list this address, but in 1930, Edna E. Fletcher, a black saleswoman, was residing at the study structure. Ms. Fletcher continued to occupy the house through the early 1950s, after her marriage to Patrick Sanders. By 1952, the house was occupied by Charles and Mary Kirkland. Charles Kirkland was a machine operator at Kirklands according to the 1960 city directory. Mary Kirkland, who worked as a grocery clerk and in private homes, still lives at this address. Mrs. Kirkland, born August 5, 1920, remembered that she had operated a store at this address at one time, named "Mary's Confectionaries," which sold candies, cookies and sodas (Mary Kirkland, personal communication 1989). She characterized it as just a "little old country store" which had shelves in the front room and a few places to sit. Mrs. Scott of 1314 Sipsey also remembers the small neighborhood store managed by Mrs. Kirkland, who grew up in the neighborhood. She resided with

FIGURE 60  
3956 Thirteenth Avenue Photograph and Plan



— Original Structure  
--- Addition

0 6 FEET  
0 2 METERS

her mother and stepfather, Arthur Posey, who worked as a miner at TCI. During the 1930s the family lived on Twentieth and Twenty First Avenue North between Sixteenth and Seventeenth streets. Ms. Kirkland was not sure who constructed the study structure but felt that it dated to the 1920s. The hallway had been put in to allow more privacy for potential renters but she said she would remove it to allow more space if she owned the house. She could recall some of the changes which had occurred to the house, namely, the conversion of the bath which was "just a flush" to a bathroom and the removal of the fireplace during her tenancy. The St. Luke AME Zion Church is the current owner.

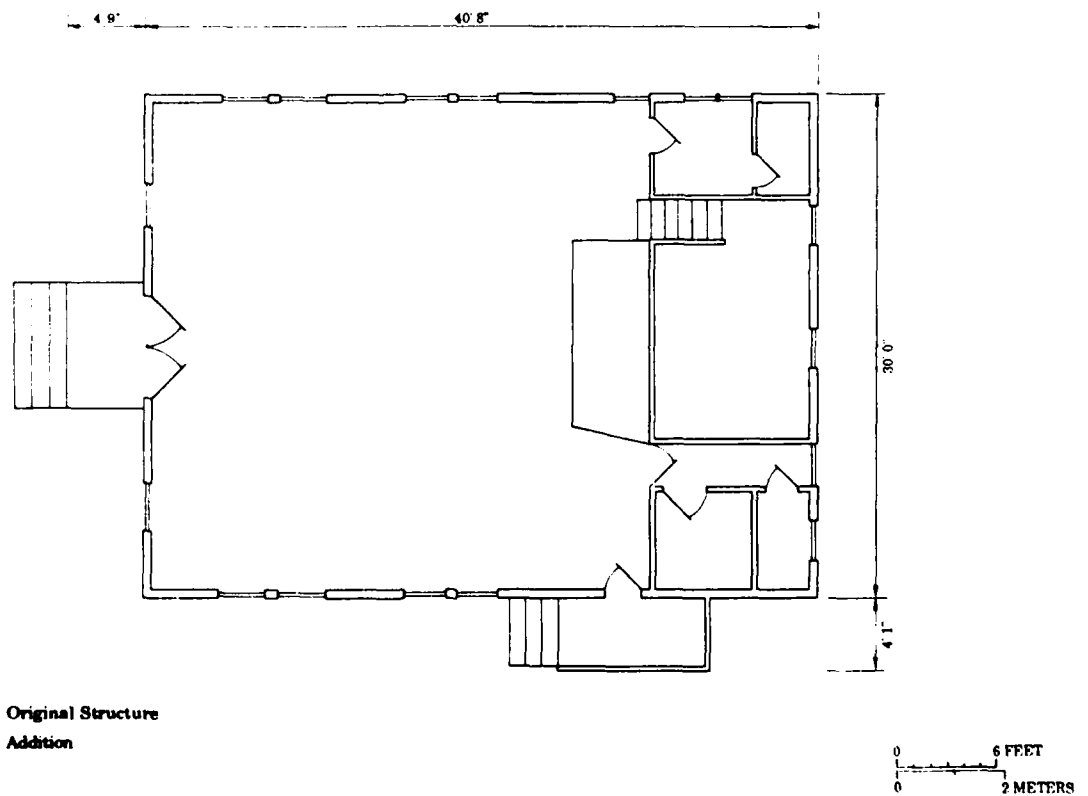
*Church, 3915 Fourteenth Avenue North*

This frame one room structure housed and was constructed to house the Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church (Figure 61). The Bryant Fountain of Love Church now rents the building. Stylistically akin to a four room cottage, a large gable roof covers the building (30' by 40') which is finished in five inch cove siding. A small gable-roofed porch hoods the doorway. Cement steps and a wooden railing lead to the entry, which has double doors, a transom window, and the address of the building over it. Two windows (double hung sash with six over six lights), a rectangular vent, and a signboard identifying the church's name, its pastor, and service times, complete the facade. Double windows appear on the sides of the structure except towards the rear, where additions and subtractions have been made to accommodate the placement of two bathrooms on either side of the pulpit. To this end, one window on the southeast side of the church has been enclosed. These windows are each 2'8" in width and are set 8" apart. Windows on the rear of the building are four in number and measure 2'4" in width; three are symmetrically placed with one directly behind the pulpit flanked by two other single windows. The fourth window appears in the southwest corner of the rear wall affording light to the bath in that corner. A shed roofed porch was placed on the southwestern wall, which has an open passageway to the church proper.

The paneled interior is simply designed as a hall in accordance with the spatial needs of the faith (Figure 62). Service at most Primitive Baptist churches entails a sermon and singing, activities requiring open space. Where the washing of the feet is practiced, basins are provided which, according to one minister, when not in use are simply stored, nested, in a corner. The only partitions within the interior are those associated with the two bathrooms in the southern corners. The bath on the southeast side is entered through a small room with a window while the bath in the southwest corner is entered from the church proper. The pulpit consists of a platform in the center of the church along the back wall. A set of steps lead to it and the choir space behind it. Church furniture consists of open rows of wooden benches, folding chairs, a piano, an organ, and a folding table.

The church property fronts on Fourteenth Avenue North, situated on the east 40' of Lots 21 and 22 of Block 62 of the Klondyke Subdivision. The church is adjacent to the group of duplexes built by Jacob Reznik on the rear of Lots 19 and 20 in the same block, discussed above. As noted above, the study property was part

FIGURE 61  
Church, 3915 Fourteenth Avenue North, Photograph and Plan



**FIGURE 62**  
**Church, 3915 Fourteenth Avenue North, Interior Views**



of the land holdings of Mrs. N. L. S. Lunsford, her husband W. G. Lunsford, and Sterling and Ida May Wood at the turn of the century. They conveyed their holdings to W. H. Tharpe in September of 1902 for a consideration of \$7,800 (Jefferson County Deed Book 314:328-329). Tharpe, a local real estate speculator, sold Lots 21 and 22, to Ed Jackson on June 20, 1903 for \$150. The property description at that time described the lots as fronting on the east line of Apalachee Street (then Bagley Street) and running along the south line of Fourteenth Avenue 140' to the alley.

On March 26, 1925, Mary E. and Ed Jackson deeded the back 40' of Lots 20 and 21 to the Trustees of the Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church for a consideration of \$200 (Jefferson County Book 1410:12). The original Trustees of the Church were Ed Jackson, Julius Jackson, and C. W. Herndon. Under this committee framework the church was built. The date of construction is based on the first appearance of the structure in the city directories. In 1926, there were no listings of any addresses on Fourteenth Avenue North between Apalachee and Coosa Streets. The church received its first listing in 1928. This date of construction corresponds to Mrs. Rosa Skinner's remembrances of the church, built by her father and her uncles.

Mrs. Skinner, the current owner, stated that the ecclesiastical structure has been remodeled several times (Rosa Skinner, personal communication 1989). Some of the remodeling and repairs have been done by contractors or by family members. She noted that when her brothers recently visited her from out of town they completed repairs on the front steps. A historic view of the church in 1939 was found in the Board of Equalization files. Built on piers, the church did not have an entry porch at that time, and a shed roofed side addition housing a bath was attached to the eastern side of the structure. Mrs. Skinner commented that the early bathroom could only be accessed from the exterior. Two panel doors composed the entry. Good sized trees were evident in the front of the church which have since been taken down; Fourteenth Avenue was unpaved, and no sidewalk appears in front of the church. Mrs. Skinner noted that a series of remodeling episodes had occurred to enlarge or improve the church. Those she remembers included the installation of the new pulpit by a private contractor between 10 and 15 years ago, and the placement of the restrooms indoors. The church was carpeted during the tenure of the last pastor of the Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church, and Reverend Bryant, the current renter, had central air conditioning installed within the last two years.

The history of this church is tied up with the Jackson family, who built and maintained the church and its congregation from the 1920s through the 1980s. Rosa Skinner, daughter of Julius and Melissa Jackson, described the Jackson brothers, Edward and Julius, as close knit. The brothers hailed from Montgomery County where their father was engaged in agriculture. None of the boys were "hired out" by their father, instead, each worked on the family farm until they migrated into the city. If economics was the catalyst for this movement, kinship determined where and how the brothers would settle. Julius Jackson first settled in Homewood but moved to East Birmingham in 1927 where his



brothers Ed and Job had already established themselves. Their upbringing must have included some experience in construction as they proceeded to build their own homes and church in the city. Ed Jackson and his brothers, Julius and Job, focused their building activities at the intersection of Apalachee Street and Fourteenth Avenue North. At least three structures in the neighborhood were built by them: the Jackson residence on the southeast corner of Apalachee and Fourteenth Avenue, the shotgun style dwelling next door, and the study structure (Figure 63B). Ed Jackson was probably also responsible for the construction of a store building on the extreme corner of the intersection of Fourteenth Avenue North and Apalachee Street in front of his residence which appears on the 1929 Sanborn map (see Figure 16). The dwellings which they constructed were owned and occupied by the Jacksons.

Occupationally, the Jackson Brothers were a diverse lot despite their rural upbringing. In addition to his role as secretary to the church for a number of years, Ed Jackson operated a grocery store out of the commercial structure located at the front of Lot 21. The store must have prospered, for according to the 1928 city directory, the operation was moved to 1327 Apalachee, the next lot to the south. The store structure on Lot 21 was torn down sometime after 1929. Ed Jackson's death occurred late in 1946. An affidavit concerning the estate was filed at the courthouse on January 4, 1947 stating that his papers were lost or misplaced but that there were no debts against the estate. Seven children were mentioned as heirs as well as his wife, Mary E. Jackson.

Julius Jackson was pastor of the Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church from its inception to his death in 1940. He supported his family as a barber. This branch of the family resided in Homewood until he became pastor of the Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church in the late 1920s. At that point, the family moved closer to the new church's location adjacent to his brother's homes in East Birmingham. The Julius Jackson family occupied at least two addresses in the neighborhood, first on Coosa Street near the church and later at Thirteenth and Escambia Streets. A photograph of Reverend Jackson and his wife Melissa Jackson on the front porch of their Coosa Street home is shown in Figure 64B. The third Jackson brother, Job, was a fireman for the L&N Railroad, living above the intersection of Fourteenth and Apalachee on Apalachee Street.

The purchase price of the property and the costs of construction for the church must have been mostly underwritten by the Jackson family. The breakdown of costs is not known, but Mrs. Skinner was told by her mother that her parents had sold property in East Birmingham to help defray the cost of the church building. Prior to the church being built, the congregation, which was "from all over town," had met at a hall on Twelfth Avenue. The Primitive Baptist church service is usually composed of an hour of preaching and a half hour of acapella singing (Reverend Gus Harter, personal communication 1989). As noted, Julius Jackson was the first pastor of the church. Mrs. Skinner remembers going to the church as a young girl when her father would line the children up on the front bench so as to deter any would be sleepers. She remembers laughingly that even babies were expected to pay attention to his

FIGURE 63

A - Photograph of Church, Jackson House, and Adjacent Shotgun House Used As Store, Then Later As Dwelling, B - Detail from 1929-49 Sanborn Map Showing Church, House, and Shotgun Structure

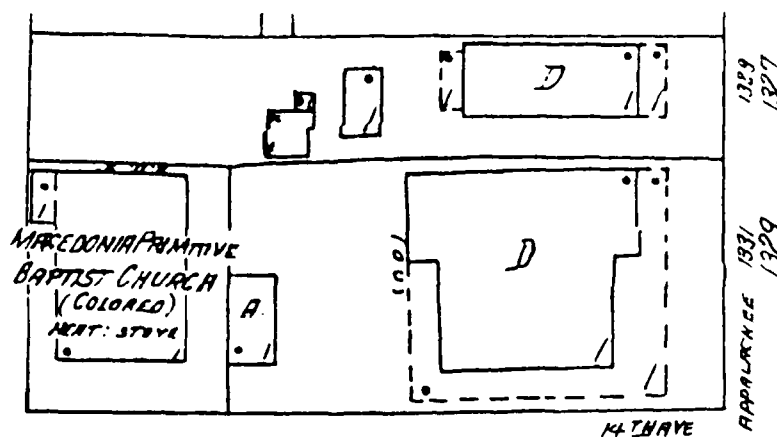
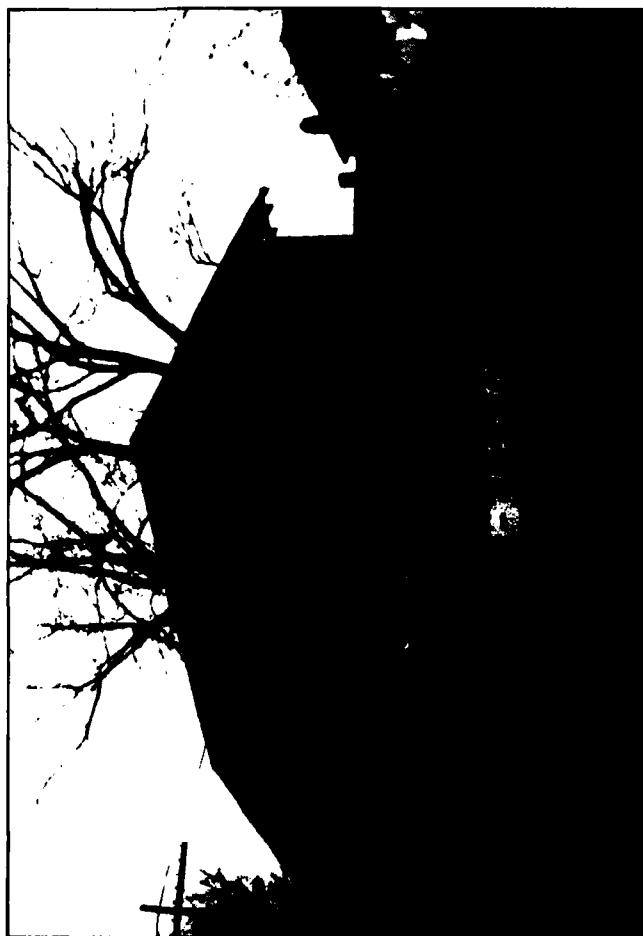


FIGURE 64

A - 1939 Photograph of Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church,

B - Reverend Julius and Mrs. Melissa Jackson, ca. 1925

(A - Jefferson County Board of Equalization Appraisal Files. Courtesy, Birmingham Public Library, Department of Archives and Manuscripts. B - Courtesy, Mrs. Rosa Skinner)



A



B

sermons. He was succeeded by Reverend Alfonzo F. Walker in the late 1940s. The 1944 city directory listed Reverend Walker as a field representative for the United Steel Workers Union, residing at 364 Fourteenth Avenue North. Later city directory information suggests that his tenure at the church lasted until 1952 after which Reverend Mitchell Frizzell became pastor. Reverend Frizzell had worked himself up through the church ranks, acting as deacon, before assuming the role of pastor which he held through 1980. His uncle, C. W. Herndon, was a founding member of the congregation (Rosa Skinner, personal communication 1989). He and his wife Sammie, who was listed in the city directories as a teacher within the City's Board of Education, resided at 346 Fourteenth Avenue North.

The church and congregation apparently fell apart after the death of Reverend Frizzell in the early 1980s. A subsequent pastor did not mesh well with the congregation and many, including the deacons, left, leaving Mrs. Skinner, who was secretary, as the only member. Faced with this, she shut down the church and at one point put it up for sale. While many preachers were interested no one was able to buy the structure, so when Reverend Alfonzo Bryant asked to rent the building she acquiesced. While Reverend Bryant is not a Primitive Baptist, he had grown up in the neighborhood and Mrs. Skinner was familiar with him and his family. Reverend Bryant currently tenants the church which now serves the congregation of the Bryant Fountain of Love Baptist Church.

#### *3926 Sixteenth Avenue North*

Although this structure has been partially destroyed by fire, some measurements and observations were able to be made (Figure 65). This is an example of a four room cottage, two rooms wide and two rooms deep, measuring 24'2" on all sides. The full facade porch extended 6' from the building. The exterior siding of the building consists of vertical board and batten. Two doors, two adjacent windows, and an attic vent complete the facade. A full porch has been destroyed by fire, as well as the interior which was inaccessible. A central chimney is in evidence along with two side chimneys. Inspection of the structure indicates that the interior duplicates the layout of 3928 Sixteenth Avenue North, which currently has two rooms to a side.

This property is situated on Lots 39 and 40, Block 91, in the Klondyke Subdivision of East Birmingham; each lot measuring 25' by 144'. The Board of Equalization Records for this address notes that in 1938 three other houses were located on these lots, namely, 1601 and 1602 Coosa Street and 3928 Sixteenth Avenue North (Figure 66). The two study structures are located on the Sixteenth Avenue North frontage. All of these were owned by a single individual, A. Sirote. The 1939 city directory lists an Isaac Sirote and his wife Sarah as delicatessen owners. Their shop was located at 1818 Fourth Avenue North while they resided at 1504 Twenty First Way. Their home address is in contradiction with the address given to the Board of Equalization surveyors, who list the Sirotas at 2220 South Fifteenth Street. Instead, Jacob Reznik, the developer of the Coosa Street commercial building discussed above, was listed at that address. Reznik's occupation in 1939 was noted as president of Alabama Building and House

FIGURE 65  
3926 Sixteenth Avenue North Photograph and Plan

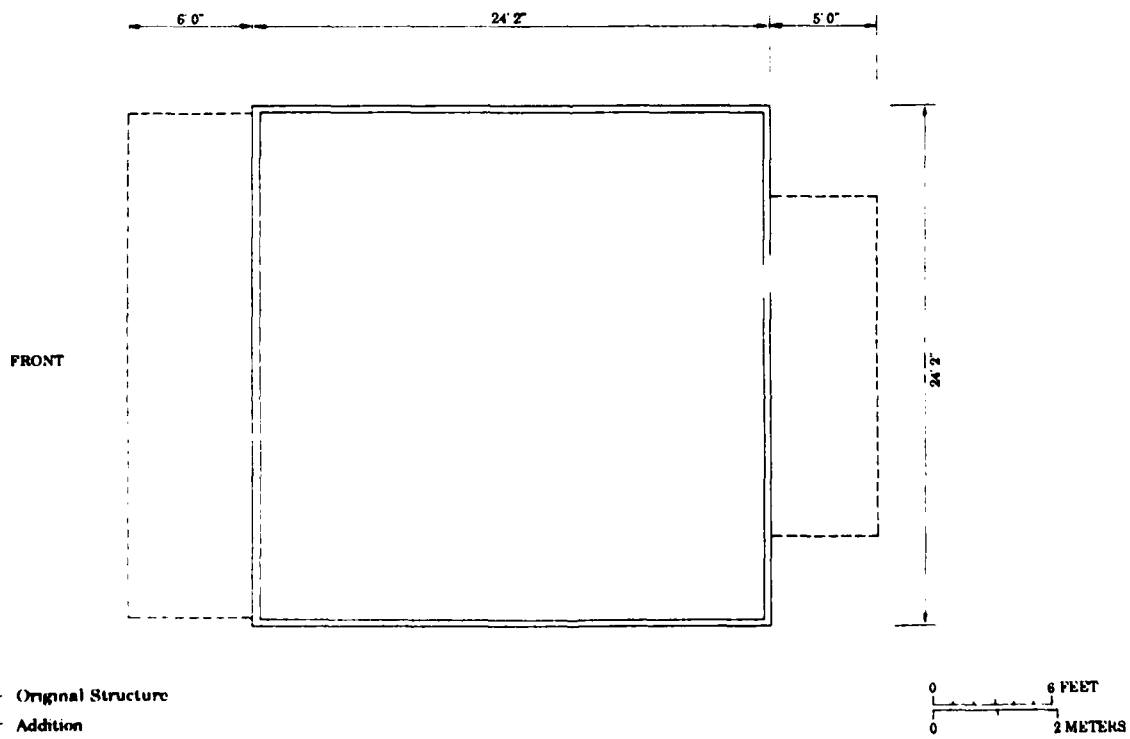


FIGURE 66

A & B - 1939 Photographs of 1601 and 1603 Coosa Street,  
C - Sketch Plan of Corner Lot Development By A. Sirote

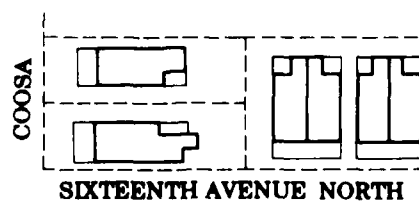
(A & B - Jefferson County Board of Equalization Appraisal Files. Courtesy,  
Birmingham Public Library, Department of Archives and Manuscripts)



A.



B.



C.

Wrecking Company. The connection between Reznik and Sirote is unclear. Hence, Reznik was apparently still involved with developing East Birmingham in the late 1930s.

The structures on Coosa were shotguns while the structures which fronted on Sixteenth Avenue were cottage types. The 1938 survey notes that the study structures on Sixteenth Avenue were two, four room duplexes which rented for \$6.00 a month. While sewer, electricity and city water were listed as improvements, 3926 as well as 3928 Sixteenth Avenue North had only a commode, and the floors and walls were reported to be in poor condition. The study structure also had a small open porch (8' by 5') centrally located on the rear. The year 1922 was listed as the estimated date of construction.

The 1930 city directory lists Sarah Howard, a black woman, in residence at 3926A; no occupation was listed for her. The second duplex was listed as vacant. Both duplexes, however, were occupied in 1940. Christopher Fox, a black machinist resided in 3926A, while Thomas Montgomery, a black laborer lived in 3926B. A decade later Henry Jones and his wife Annie occupied 3926A. Jones was a helper at VC Chemicals. Isaiah and Mattie Wellington resided on the other side; Wellington was a laborer at Lehigh Portland Cement. Finally, the 1960 directory noted only one occupant for the entire structure, Mariah Crum, who resided in 3926B. As discussed earlier the structure has been destroyed by fire; the date of the fire is unknown.

#### *3928 Sixteenth Avenue North*

This structure is a companion structure to 3926 Sixteenth Avenue North, having the same configuration with the exception of a rear addition (15'3" by 4'6") which is finished with five inch wooden cove siding. The structure has a full front porch with a shed roof supported by wood posts (Figure 67). The six windows in the original house are double hung sash windows with four over four lights, while the windows in the addition are fixed with four lights. The windows on the facade and in the front room are 2'4" in width. The back room, on the other hand, has double windows, measuring 1'9" across. An opening has been added between the two back rooms converting the duplexes into a single dwelling.

The Board of Equalization Records for this structure have been discussed above. Like its companion structure, the 1938 survey estimated that the structure was 16 years old at that date, shared similar improvements and earned the same rent. Historic photographs of the companion structures are shown in Figure 68. The shotguns on the property rented for \$8.00 a month, garnering an additional two dollars a month for the extra room they provided. All four structures were fully rented at that time. Interestingly, the city directories checked only listed two residents for the duplexes for one year, 1940, Annie Cuspert and Mittie Robinson. Maria Williams, a cook, was the single listing in 1930. Oram and Nolan Ziegler, a worker at Stockham Pipe Fitting, resided there in 1950. Finally, Charles Davis and his wife Elizabeth occupied the structure in 1960. Perhaps Annie Cuspert and Mittie Robinson were the only dual residents the structure had. This

FIGURE 67  
3928 Sixteenth Avenue North Photograph and Plan

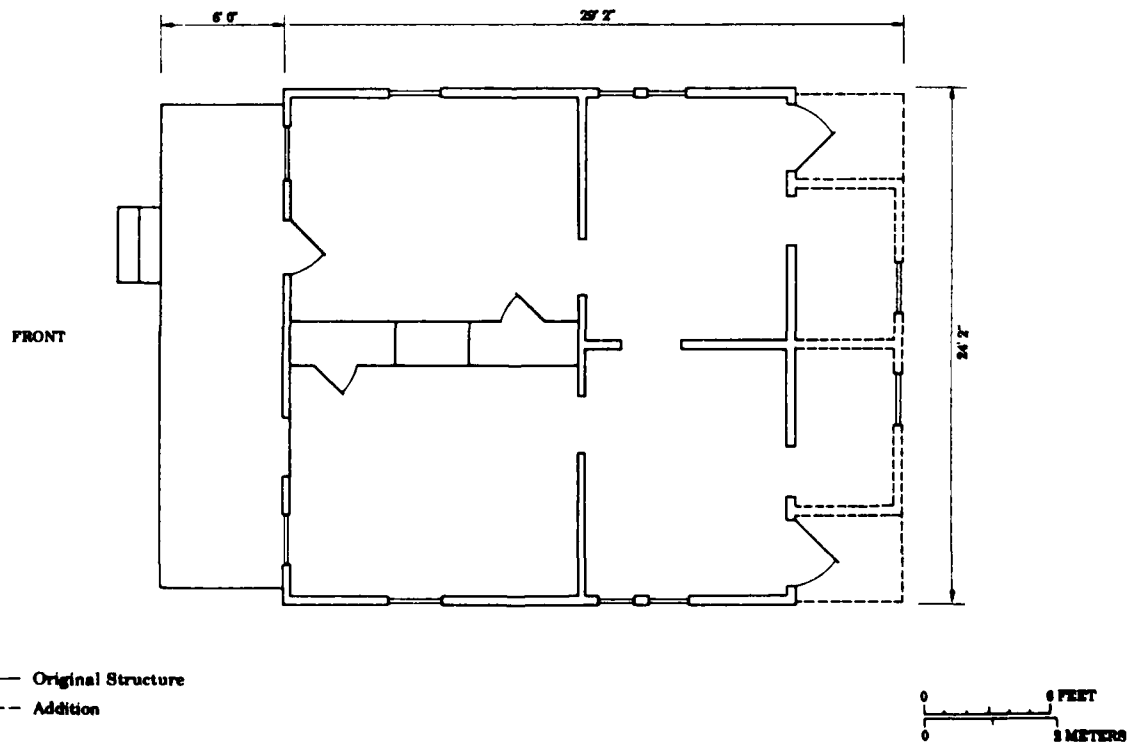
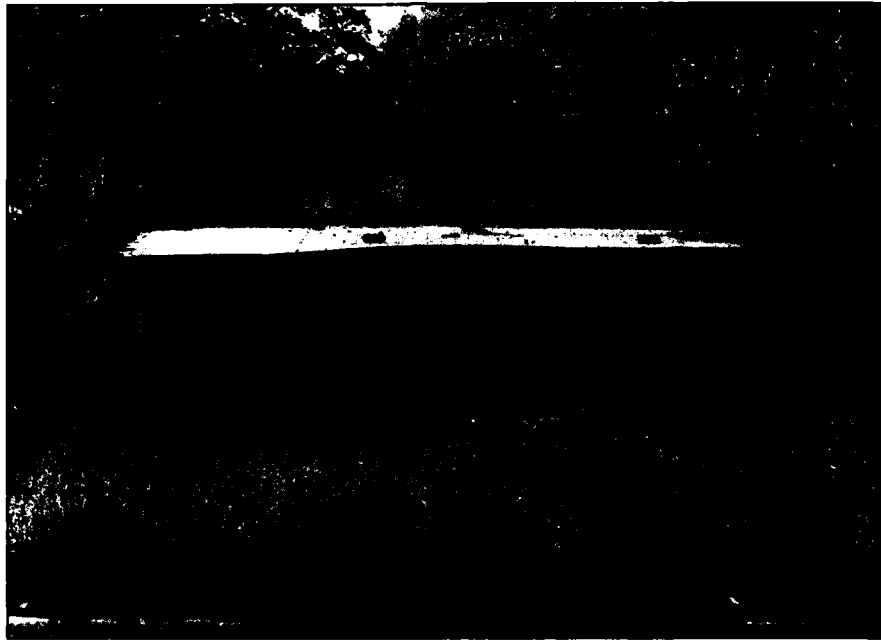




FIGURE 68

1939 Photographs of: A - 3926 Sixteenth Avenue, and B - 3928 Sixteenth Avenue  
(Jefferson County Board of Equalization Appraisal Files. Courtesy,  
Birmingham Public Library, Department of Archives and Manuscripts)



A. 3926 Sixteenth Avenue North



B. 3928 Sixteenth Avenue North

suggests that the conversion to a single dwelling occurred sometime in the 1940s. The building is currently abandoned.

### **Roebuck/East Lake**

Only one house was recorded in this neighborhood, which is technically located within East Lake near its border with Roebuck. The following is located within the Arden Park Subdivision, southwest of the Roebuck golf course.

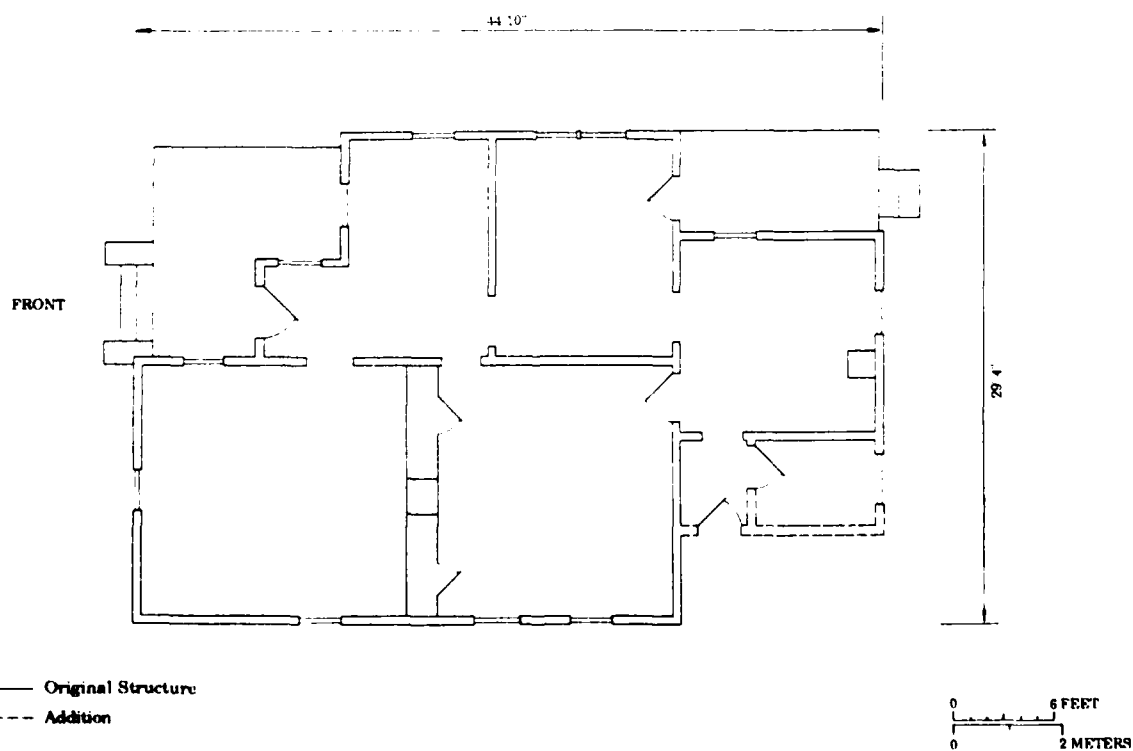
#### *8600 First Court Street*

This is an example of a six room, frame, Victorian cottage covered with wooden clapboard siding (Figure 69). Gable roofs cover the front and side ells while a third, almost pyramidal roof line, lies between the gable roofs, overhanging the entryway. Originally, the house was probably L-shaped, until rear additions were completed giving it a more irregular appearance in plan view. The rear additions, which may have occurred in two episodes, are covered by shed roofs. The facade of the house faces the northeast and includes a small open front porch supported by wood columns and covered by a gable roof. Beside the front door which is accented with a transom window, two other windows were placed. One is located on the front ell, another adjacent to the door. A louvered attic vent is visible on the front gable. A brick chimney is located centrally on the main gable covering the side ell.

Steps leading to the porch are constructed of brick and the base of the porch is also trimmed in this medium. The exterior's dimensions are 44'10" by 29'4". There are twelve windows in the house; with the exception of one (a metal sliding type), all are double hung sash windows. The windows on the side ell facing Eighty-Sixth Street are double windows; the remainder are single windows. Nine windows measure 2'6" in width. The departure from this uniform width occurs with the double windows (2'4") and a single window (3'0") in the back room of the house. The double windows also deviate from another pattern; two over two lights occurred in ten of the windows, including the back room window, but six over six panes compose the double side windows.

The front door opens into a small entryway (4' wide) which, shotgun style, is in rhythm with all of the doorways leading to the back rooms on that side of the house. The two rooms on the west side of the house are also accessed from this "hallway" area. The rooms on the eastern side of the house and the added rear room are smaller than the rooms on the western side of the house. The front room measures 12'8" in width and 8'7" deep, the interior room is the same width but approximately 2 deeper. The back room, which is positioned centrally on the back of the house, is square, being approximately 11'6" on both sides. A chimney was located on the rear wall to the west of the window. A small room used as a bath was added to the western side of the back room, approximately 5'6" in width and having the same depth. The bath can be accessed from the square back room or a small hallway which leads to a rear entrance on the western side of the

FIGURE 69  
8600 First Court North Photograph and Plan



addition. A small open porch with a shed roof is located on the eastern side of the square rear room. The final two rooms on the western half of the house share a fireplace; closets abut the fireplace on both sides. The doorway from the back room on this side to the front was blocked by one of these closets. Only the back room was accessible at the time of the field documentation. Its dimensions are 15'2" in width and 14'2" deep.

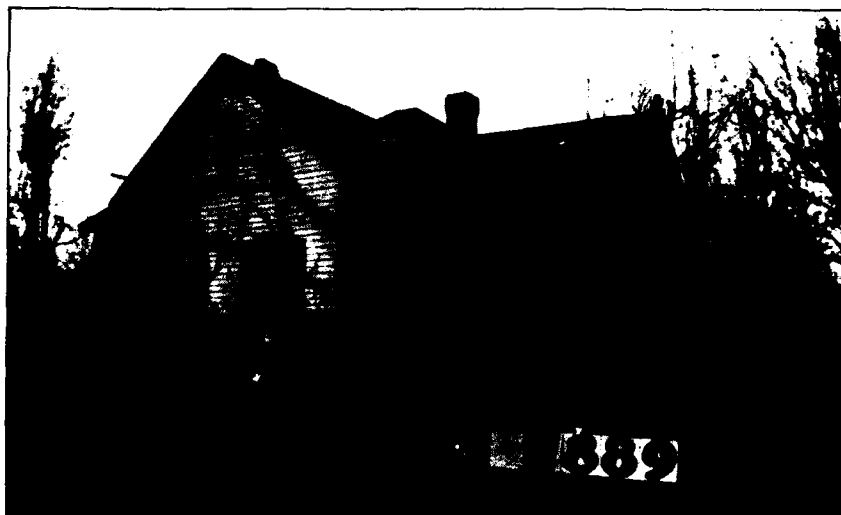
The first time the address of this structure, 8600 First Court Street, reached the city directories was the year 1928. Given the methodology that has been used on the other buildings, this would indicate that the structure dated to the late 1920s. While the other houses could be dated in that manner because of supportive data beyond the directories, this structure cannot. It appears to be a stylistic anomaly within this neighborhood, the Arden Park Subdivision of East Lake. Figure 22 shows a plat of the subdivision; the structure occupies Lot 38 within Block 4 on the corner of Ninth Avenue and Brown Street. Probate records for the county date the subdivision to 1913; it was owned by the East Lake Land Company at that point. Lot size within the subdivision was fairly uniform, 25' by 110' except for the study lot, Lot 1 in Block 4, Lot 38 in Block 3, and the set of lots #20-29 in Block 15 facing the Boulevard. The latter were 50.55' in width but had varying depths. The design intentions for this subdivision appears clear. The lots on the boulevard were intended to be developed by the more affluent, who could afford to purchase the larger and more expensive lots and develop them accordingly. The remainder of the subdivision was composed of smaller lots affordable to the middle and lower classes. To an extent, all classes could afford a piece of what East Lake had to offer.

The study lot and the other lots that adjoined it that deviated from the smaller lot size and appear to have predated the subdivision. The 1938 tax surveyors noted that the structure and its two outbuildings were 40 years old at that time. This would place the date of construction as the turn of the century, which is in keeping with the architectural style (Figure 70A). When the address is first listed in the directories the structure was occupied by Joseph Montano, who was a clerk in a family grocery store operation called "Prospero Montano's" in 1927. Montano remained in the house through the thirties. In 1938, at the time of the tax survey, the house was owner-occupied but the owner's name was not given in the records. The house was described as a six room cottage with two sheds. According to the 1938 plan, the sheds were located southeast of the main house (Figure 70B). Also, the house had already attained its irregular shape by that date, hence the additions predated 1938. Improvements were listed: septic tank, gas, electricity, city water, two grates, two flues, but no baths. Presumably one of the sheds was used as an outhouse. The owner in 1938 owned Lots 34-38, which were all bounded by a picket fence. With the exception of Lot 38 all the remaining lots were vacant. The surrounding roads were unpaved. The owner of the house in 1940 was Mrs. Ada Covey, a widow. George Armel, a brickmason and his wife, Anna, owned and occupied the structure from 1950 through the 1970s. It is currently a rental property. This is the only structure studied which housed white Birmingham workers.

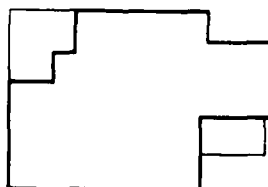
FIGURE 70

A - 1939 Photograph of 8600 Court Street,  
B - 1938 Plan of House and Shed Configuration

(Jefferson County Board of Equalization Appraisal Files. Courtesy,  
Birmingham Public Library, Department of Archives and Manuscripts)



A.



B.

0 12 FEET  
0 4 METERS

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

As outlined in the Introduction, this study was designed to examine the origins of the four communities in Birmingham and to compare the plans which guided their development; to note if the marginality of the study areas had an impact on that planning and the architectural forms it engendered; to inspect the architectural forms found within the sample and discuss change over time in style, form, and materials, as well as to discuss the use of internal space within these structures; and to tie-in population movements or other larger cultural changes to any corresponding change within the architectural repertoire exhibited by the sample of residential, ecclesiastical, and commercial architecture chosen by the Army Corps of Engineers. This final research topic is subsumed within the other topics presented in the following discussion. This sample of 26 structures is certainly not definitive of either architecture along Village Creek or of the communities studied. But, like individual case studies or architectural biographies, as they have been called within the context of this report, they begin to tell a story about the lives of those who purchased a sandwich at the East Birmingham Grill, shot a game of pool at Jennings Pool Room, sold ice pops to the children leaving Alberta Shields Elementary School from the porch of 1314 Sipsev Street, or gathered in prayer at the Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church. On this basis, we offer the following responses to the research design.

### Comparison of Urban Planning and Design

The foregoing has served as an introduction to four communities in Birmingham which border Village Creek. Historically, this creek has played a number of roles in Birmingham's development; some of these roles have been positive while others have not. The early perception of the creek as a source of water for the community and industry and as an informal recreation area changed, as nineteenth century disposal patterns for industrial waste and sewage polluted the stream. The creek was relegated to the status of a "nuisance" by 1912. The twentieth century expansion along its course has also contributed to another problem -- periodic flooding. Despite these drawbacks, the lots adjacent to the creek were built out and occupied from the late 1920s to the Depression, and in sporadic growth spurts (dependent on the nation's economy) after the Depression. In two of the communities discussed, Ensley and East Birmingham, the creek-side lots were inhabited by black working class families who took advantage of the opportunity to become homeowners or to become renters with private, rather than company, landlords. The other two communities, East Lake and Roebuck, were geared in another direction. East Lake was a "new suburb," a habitable place for the working man, away from the industrial confusion. If the design of East Lake intended to put some distance between the home and the workplace, Roebuck's design was to literally transport the urban worker back to nature. As a consequence of these differences, their respective town plans and their architecture are also different.

Nineteenth-century Birmingham, itself a young city, witnessed the development of a number of industrial satellite towns, as the iron industry and the railroad manacled the Birmingham district in its pursuit of economic gain. Ensley and East Birmingham were part of this evolution. Ensley, however, was dominated by a single industry, while East Birmingham had a broader economic base ranging from the manufacture of iron to stoves to bricks. In each case, the initial town plan was a grid system, irrespective of place or topography. The town of Ensley was placed adjacent to the industrial plant, and the major commercial thoroughfare would become Nineteenth Street. In both communities, commercial districts would develop along streetcar lines. Ensley was initially viewed as a self-sufficient entity, and hence there were no connecting links to Birmingham at the outset. Neither parks nor commons are noted in the early plan of the city nor in the Grefenkamp Atlas view of Ensley in 1925. Instead, narrow lots characterize the block development of this town, which was incorporated into Birmingham in 1910 and connected to the city by streetcar service during the same period.

East Birmingham is not unlike Ensley in plan, having been gridded without concern for topography as well. Blocks, spliced with narrow lots usually 144' deep and intersected by an alley, were laid out across Village Creek and its environs, with a certain nonchalance, foregoing the question of how future residents would negotiate the creek which snaked through their community. Another distinguishing characteristic of East Birmingham as it evolved was the establishment of industries on its perimeter, which comprised an industrial ring of plants and low-lying factories surrounding the residential community. Again, this town was laid out with a speculator's eye, a design with profit in mind. No parks or commons are visible in the town plan or in the later view afforded by the Grefenkamp's Atlas (1925). In some cases parks appear to have been later additions established by companies. All of those interviewed within East Birmingham talked about a now defunct park, owned by Stockham's and adjacent to the plant, where the company baseball team would play against other neighborhood's company teams. While this is interesting as a possible precursor of the industrial park, it was still not a municipal park nor does there appear to have been one originally planned for East Birmingham. As Reps (1965:414) summarizes, town planning by American industry was disappointing in that it failed to produce a town which was substantively different or better than those produced by other sources. Ensley and East Birmingham would have benefited from the Olmsted Plan, which sought to establish recreational grounds along the low-lying areas which abutted the creek, but this plan, produced for the City of Birmingham in 1925, was largely ignored. In summary, Ensley and East Birmingham were communities planned about industry.

East Lake was a step forward on Birmingham's part, providing a better environment for the working man. This quote, albeit from Louisville (*Illustrated Louisville: Kentucky's Metropolis* 1891:74, as quoted in Preservation Alliance 1980) expresses the intention of the East Lake developers:

To the hard-worked man, nothing affords greater relief, gives greater strength than the ability in a moment to turn his back on the din and

turmoil and dust and confusion -- the inevitable concomitants of busy quarters -- and from his own hill-side cottage breathe the pure air of heaven.

This recognition of the need for a healthier standard of living, or the "pure air of heaven," was also coupled with the recognition that there were different strata of income within the industrial work force. Some of these would have the financial wherewithal to buy into the purportedly modestly priced lots within the suburb. The original design for East Lake was a narrow stretch of blocks gridded along the streetcar line, and the damming of Roebuck Springs gave the community an artificial lake. This lake, emblematic of the new community set aside for home-builders rather than speculators, and touted as a "pleasure resort," became, in terms of the town focus, the counterpart of Ensley's industrial "big four."

The last community, Roebuck Springs, was the logical outcome of a new generation of designers who realized the shortcomings of the grid system and preferred to work with rather than against a site's topography. As noted in the architectural description of this suburb, the Roebuck Springs historic district is conspicuous for the use of building materials left in their raw state, a characteristic of the Craftsman style. The contrast between the winding streets of this development, which would be built out with substantial bungalows and country homes fashioned in the English style, and the street pattern of East Birmingham and Ensley, shows a difference in attitude toward urban design as well as a response to the new economic hierarchy forming in the industrial city. In summary, three of the four Birmingham communities along the creek studied shared a common design, in that they were gridded with streets and avenues along side either a railway or a streetcar line, irrespective of site composition. Roebuck's design followed a new course in urban planning.

While the discussion above has centered on the original layout of the four communities, to leave the discussion at this juncture would be naive. While the land company surveyor may have laid out a subdivision grid which would act as an organizing framework, actual development within Ensley and East Birmingham was organic, not systematic, particularly in the vicinity of Village Creek. Hudgins and White (1985) and White (1981) offer full discussions on the company housing which most early workers lived in within the Birmingham district. No "quarters" were found within our study area, but this type of housing would have been the first constructed within the industrial town of Ensley and would also have appeared adjacent to the Vanderbilt Furnace in East Birmingham. Lined along a street front or avenue, a house form would be replicated again and again, establishing a block front rhythm. This route of development was not typical of the study areas in Ensley or East Birmingham. As the study sample had only one house outside of these communities, the remainder of this discussion will focus upon them.

The historical research indicates that there were three responses to community development. In some cases, land companies with strong financial support would take an active role in house construction (Hudgins and White



1985). This was particularly true in East Lake and Roebuck, and in Ensley during its initial phase of growth. The remaining avenues of development were either through private construction or through independent speculators. It is unknown which, if any, of the houses within the study sample were constructed by land companies, but the sample does show the mark of the speculator and private home constructor. In East Birmingham, four speculators were noted: Jacob Reznick, A. Sirote, S. J. Price, and Harry Hall. The properties owned by these men were all composed of two or more contiguous lots but never a full block. The first three men were outsiders to the community. Reznick was responsible for the brick store building and probably the trio of duplexes which filled the back of the lots along Fourteenth Avenue North. Sirote, according to the tax data, was the owner of four structures on the corner of Sixteenth Avenue and Coosa Street and the manager of a commercial establishment in another part of the city. He resided with Reznick in 1939, which suggests that they were related or associated in some way. Reznick developed the store, and possibly the duplexes behind it, at Coosa and Fourteenth. S. J. Price was the vice-president of a local stove manufacturing firm. Price purchased a group of lots on Tombigbee Street between Sixteenth and Seventeenth Avenues and built a number of homes around a pair of single shotgun houses which were on the lots prior to his purchase. Harry Hall, one of three black contractors listed in Birmingham's city directories in 1942, lived on Fourteenth Avenue North, and according to residents of Sipsey Street, was the first landlord for most of the houses on the block. The lots that he owned on Sipsey Street were in the block through which Village Creek had coursed prior to its channelization along Fifteenth Avenue. The creek was filled in and these lots then sold as housing sites. Given the history of the lots, they were no doubt sold cheaply, and Hall purchased and built-out the few homes which line Sipsey Street above Thirteenth Avenue. Each of these speculators chose a limited group of house types to place on their investment properties. For the Sirote tract, two shotguns and two four room cottages made the most efficient use of the corner lot. Reznick's store and residential complex was equally efficient in terms of space. In the case of the Price property, lot lines were ignored, as houses such as the four room cottage and the shotgun nestled closely to enlarge the profit margin for their owner. Hall's houses were identified by the street's residents as a series of single shotgun houses and 1314 Sipsey Street, a narrow two story house, possibly a shotgun variant, which was resided in by Hall immediately following its construction. Finally, in addition to the use of different house types, each of these speculative holdings took advantage of the frontages afforded by corner lots.

The preference of the speculator for the corner lot was not missed by private owner/builders, such as the Jackson brothers of East Birmingham or the McCray brothers of Ensley. Private home builders were the third group to develop the study area. Significantly, kinship shaped the urban home environment for these families, which acted in unison in building their own homes, churches and workplaces. This use of the extended family to develop urban home sites suggests a bringing to town of a community- or kinship-based tradition of homebuilding and residence. The McCray shotgun, which was built for Mr. McCray's mother, and the Scott/Cherry house (1314 Sipsey) which had an addition constructed to

take care of ill or extended family members, are examples of urban housing geared to extended, or fluctuating, family residence. Hence the extended family helped build these houses, and, in some cases, lived adjacent to or within the finished product.

In summary, the speculator's as well as the private builder's choice of lot location and house type was based upon their needs, not a community plan. This engendered an unorganized pattern of growth within some blocks, with open spaces adjacent to house clusters (for example, see the 1929 Sanborn Maps), and the use of house types which maximized the efficient use of space on these lots. This pattern was evident with the private owners studied as well. Hence, the overall look of the study areas is one of organization within lots as opposed to overall block organization, as none of the speculators studied were in possession of a full block, but either preferred or could only afford to develop two or more lots within a block.

### **The Marginal Landscape**

The areas along the creek bed were the last to be developed, as Hudgins and White (1985) have pointed out, all of them being parts of later additions to the town plans of Ensley, East Birmingham, and East Lake. Many lots would be built out as part of the construction boom in the late 1920s in Ensley and particularly in East Birmingham. Those in East Lake would be developed after the 1950s, as they were still in cultivation up to that point. The house types within that part of the survey area reflect their youth rather than any adherence to an architectural style. Contractor modular homes, English cottages, and bungalows compose the built landscape within the East Lake project area, according to the 1985 survey. The houses within the current sample in East Birmingham and Ensley and those adjacent to them tend to be low-lying frame cottages varying from lot to lot in terms of style and size. As noted, while some houses appear in pairs, the overall look of the neighborhoods is eclectic and disorganized due to the organic growth pattern under which they were developed. The research design presented the question of whether any patterns appear in the architectural forms which surround the creek and if those patterns reflect the marginality of the landscape.

The Eleventh Street houses in Ensley, which are situated on narrow lots of varying depths which back onto the creek, offer a certain example of architectural type married to lot size and level of investment. Single shotguns are in the majority on this street front, as this house form was best fit to the available lot size. Bungalows, intermixed with four room cottages as well as shotguns, line the surrounding streets, which makes this grouping of shotguns along Eleventh Street more noticeable. Four out of the five study houses are single shotguns; one has a squat side addition. Hence, the choice of the shotgun appears to have been a response to lot size and location on Eleventh Street.

A survey of the historic maps of East Birmingham indicates some patterns within the neighborhoods, particularly in the areas adjacent to the creek. The use of the historical maps in this regard is predicated on the fact that the community

is so dissected at this point that patterns based on the standing architecture are hard to discern, and it is difficult to posit to what degree our sample is representative. The 1929 Sanborn maps shows that the area north of Village Creek and below Fifteenth Avenue, where developed, was built out with single and double shotgun houses. While some of the latter may actually be four room cottages, some, by their length, appear to be true double shotgun houses, three rooms deep. Below the creek, house types are more varied overall but in some blocks, notably above Fourteenth Avenue on Coosa Street, clusters of identical, buildings, rectangular in plan, are shown. This is probably due to the age of the houses on the blocks which developed from south to north. The second 1929 Sanborn showing the area above Fifteenth Avenue also indicates a preference for rectangular buildings near the creek, many of which appear to be single or double shotguns. Overall, there appears to be an elimination of the more irregular house forms, such as the T-cottage, in preference to the narrow shotgun or the four room cottage. This trend continues in the Sanborn map series showing the general neighborhood between 1929-1949. The area above Fifteenth Street shows the eclipse of the irregular house form and its replacement with rectangular, easily constructed, inexpensive house types such as the shotgun and the four room cottage. While the shotgun was an early house type within the community, its utility as a cheap rental unit and the ease with which it could be built underscores its later popularity. Speculators and private builders, who participated in the housing boom of the late 1920s and later construction episodes, were either interested in housing that suited their budget or the architectural type which would allow them to best expand their earnings. This change in architectural style then has its roots in economics as well as time. A comparison to the Louisville, Kentucky shotguns, which were replete with architectural detail, and organized to provide privacy via their window piercing, indicates that the Birmingham examples covered the bare essentials for worker's housing in a Southern city. Unlike the Louisville examples, there would be no external trim or architectural detailing on the Birmingham sample. In fact, the only example of exterior trim noted on any of the houses appears in the historic photograph of one of the McCray rentals or the turned posts which supported some of the older houses within the study group. This overview suggests that the project area's location along Village Creek may reflect its marginality through a greater occurrence of single and double shotgun house types within this setting. It should also be noted that the use of these house forms at this date in time (the 1920s) may also reflect the less robust and optimistic economics of Birmingham at that time.

### **The Architectural Forms**

The church and store are exceptions within the sample, which is composed otherwise of domestic architecture. The church is a one room, vernacular building, built by an extended family and pastored by a member of that family. It is unlike the grander ecclesiastical architectural examples within the neighborhood, such as the Greater New Bethel Baptist Church on Apalachee Street or the New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, and others which are two

story structures of brick construction. This frame example had the look of a country church with its forward facing gable and simple lines. The brick store is also an anomaly in a neighborhood which is unified in its use of frame construction. The only other brick building nearby is the Ed Jackson house, discussed earlier in the text. The store was a departure for the neighborhood, as the store that predated it as well as other stores shown in the Sanborn maps would extend their claim on the ambulatory public by porches which overhung the street. The brick store developed by Jacob Reznik and financed by the Steiner Brothers reflected a new concept in commercial space for the area, with the storefront being setback from the street. One other structure, a shotgun house with a hallway, now used as a dwelling, was once "a country store." As noted earlier, Wilson (1975) has observed the prevalent use of the shotgun as a commercial space in rural situations in Alabama. This example and the number of single shotguns identified as stores on the Sanborn maps of East Birmingham indicates that they were popular as commercial spaces in urban settings as well.

Table 2 provides a summary of the original dimensions of the eight single shotgun houses measured for this study. Out of the eight examples, only one shotgun deviated from an average width of approximately 14', and that example was 12'4" in width. Notably, this structure was 1326 Sipsey Street, which was sited on a lot which measured 21' in width; the other 14' wide shotguns were situated on 25' wide lots. A review of the typical width of the T-cottage lots indicates that the shotgun was favored for the narrow lot. With the exception of the two room shotgun, the remainder were three rooms deep. Lengths were also within a certain range, namely 37' to 40'. The two room shotgun was only 28'3" in length. The room size, which is listed from front to back for each example in Table 2, shows that the central room, which is traditionally used as a bedroom, is always the largest of the three rooms, being one to two feet deeper. This space was no doubt needed if the structure was to house a family rather than a single person. The three constants within the sample were the positioning of the windows opposite one another for cross ventilation, the presence of the full front porch, and the position of the interior chimney which heated the two front rooms. The first two features, which were not found on the Louisville shotgun examples, were architectural necessities to endure the summer heat. In seven of these structures the porch was covered by a projecting gable roof. The exception was 1326 Sipsey Street, which had a shed roof originally. The positioning of the doors was varied. Some of the examples had aligned doors throughout while others had doorways only aligned in the front rooms. The current and historical photographs show clearly the lack of ornamentation on these buildings although porch swings are visible on quite a few of the houses in the late 1930s and 1940s as well as fences.

A summary of the three T-cottage measurements is offered in Table 3. The original dimensions are similar for all three and the dates of construction indicate an early popularity for the type, which was denoted as a "country house" by Georgia Mosely. Room size is given for the single room opposite the hall, then the front room, followed by the back room. The house at 1606 Tombigbee had two perfectly square rooms joined by a more narrow hall than the other examples to

Table 2. Single Shotgun Comparative Measurements

Address	Lot Size	Width by Length	Date of Construction	Rooms	Size of Rooms	Doors	Fireplace Location
1334 Ave. V	25' x 140'	14'6" x 38'	1930s	3	12'6", 14'6", 9'6"	offset aligned	Interior
1124 11th St.	25' x 220'	14'2" x 40'3"	c.1928	3	13'6", 15'5", 9'6"	offset aligned	"
1128 11th St.	25' x 145'	14'4" x 38'	c.1928	3	12'7", 13'10", 10'	not aligned	"
1130 11th St.	25' x 130'	14'4" x 38'	c.1930	3	12'7", 13'10", 10'	not aligned	"
1326 Sipsey St.	21'4" x 107'3"	14'5" x 37'10"	c.1942	3	12'9", 13'7", 9'10"	not aligned	"
1429 Apalachee	25' x 144'	12'4" x 40'4"	c.1930s	3	12'7", 14'3", 12'7"	not aligned	"
1421 Apalachee	25' x 140'	14'4" x 38'3"	c.1920s	3	12'6", 14'4", 9'5"	offset aligned	"
1126 11th St.	25' x 220'	14'4" x 28'3"	c.1928	2	12'7", 14'	not aligned	"

Table 3. T-Cottage Comparative Measurements

Address	Lot size	Original Dimensions	Date of Construction	Room Size	Hall Width
1419 Apalachee	50' x 144'	34'3" x 30"	1900s	13'2" x 13' 13'3" x 13'8" 13'3" x 15'2" 15'4" x 13'6"	6'
1227 Cahaba	45' x 79'	37'4" x 30'	c.1912	13'8" x 17'3" 13'9" x 13'3" 14'3" x 13'4" 13'5" x 13'5"	6'
1606 Tombigbee	44' x 144'	34'1" x 31'	c. 1912	13'5" x 13'5"	4'9"

the opposing single room. Another structure, 1227 Cahaba Street, has a bay window in its front facing gable end which extends the length of that room. The origins of this house type, possibly as a dogtrot house, have been discussed earlier, as well as the resemblance of the five room Victorian cottage centered around a hall to this plan. The recognition of this type as a country house by a resident tends to underscore the T-cottages' association with the dogtrot. It has been suggested that the T-cottage and Victorian cottage may be related, and that the latter may simply be an upscale version of the T-cottage, which was built concurrently.

The four-room cottage appears on a variety of lot sizes, and five of the examples are square in configuration, measuring 28' or 24' on a side. The remainder are rectangular, being one to two feet longer than wide. The single deviation to this pattern is the McCray structure at 1308/10 12th Place, which is five feet longer than it is wide. These buildings are interesting because of their flexibility as either a one family house or as a "two by two" duplex rental property. While these houses were originally built to house two families, primarily as rentals, this original function could change if needed. Thus, in some cases, the duplex version would be converted to a single family home at the request of the resident, in order to acquire more space for a growing family. The McCray examples also show that these structures allowed extended families to live side by side. Finally, one of the East Birmingham examples was changed from a single family home to a two family home whenever the need arose within the owner's family. To make this conversion, the connecting doors would be closed and furniture would be shifted around.

This brief summary of the architectural forms underscores the nature of these working class homes. The overall change within house form was the elimination of house types such as the T-cottage in favor of more rectangular structures. Perhaps the most interesting change which occurred was the acquisition of four room cottages by one family and their use of both sides or perhaps only one side as the need arose. One topic not tackled here was the use of the yard and porch as an extra room and living area, but this should be mentioned, as most of the interviews carried out with residents took place on the porches and in the yards, particularly in East Birmingham, and most of the porches currently and historically had some type of porch furnishings. Finally, the single addition which characterized these dwellings was the addition of a bath and sometimes a kitchen to update or to establish the service area of the house. Many of these houses were still not plumbed up to and through the 1940s, which means that privies were still in use despite the availability of sewer hookups. This no doubt stemmed from the expense of this improvement. Actual room additions were more prevalent on the more substantial or older house types such as the bungalow, T-cottages, and Victorian cottage within the sample.

Finally, this study of structures along Village Creek has noted along with Hudgins and White (1985) the persistence of the shotgun house within the study area. As development within the study communities grew, so did the number of these houses. They became, for the private builder and the speculator, a popular

form of housing for the black working class families for varying reasons, some economic, some because of their familiarity with the form, and some for the pragmatic reason that they were well suited to the narrow city lots. The T-cottage and its cohort, the Victorian cottage, were supplanted by buildings rectangular in plan, to house the expanding work force of Birmingham in the late 1920s.

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